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Utopic / Dystopic Mirroring: The Romance and the Picaresque in the Spanish and Russian Traditions

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by

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Dedication

To Rob,

my favorite person

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Abstract

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This dissertation explores the relationship between the romance and the picaresque and their mirroring structures of correlated utopianism/dystopianism through the Spanish and Russian traditions. The romance and the picaresque are related modes: while the romance is a utopic vision of life as a quest, the picaresque is its carnivalesque inversion. The two modes are mirror images of each other, and while the romance is predominantly utopic, the picaresque is primarily dystopic. I argue that, in addition to a dominant utopianism/dystopianism, each of these modes contain recessive undertones – dystopic in the romance, and utopic in the picaresque – which are indispensable to their structure.

I trace this pattern of utopianism/dystopianism through different types of romance and picaresque texts, beginning with the most popular Spanish chivalric romance, Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo's 16th century *Amadís de Gaula*, in which the dominant utopianism is accompanied by numerous dystopic disruptions, which are necessary to

move the plot forward, but which showcase the futility of the knight's efforts. Similarly, in the Russian socialist romance, such as Nikolai Chernyshevsky's 1863 novel *Что дѣлать?* (*What Is to Be Done?*), the dystopic undertone is a necessary motivation for the achievement of a revolutionary utopia. I further show that, through a carnivalesque inversion, the picaresque creates a contrasting structure in which recessive utopianism underlies the dominant dystopianism. In the Early Modern Spanish picaresque texts, such as the anonymous *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554), Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache* (1599) and Francisco de Quevedo's *El buscón* (*The Swindler*, 1626), the pícaro is moved by a belief that he can rise above his birth and circumstances, disrupting the strict hierarchy that the chivalric romance promotes. In Venedikt Erofeev's *Москва - Петушки* (*Moscow to the End of the Line*, 1970), the Soviet pícaro believes in a personal paradise that exists just out of reach, in which he could be free from restrictions of life in the USSR. My analysis of these texts is primarily informed by Northtrop Frye's work on the romance, particularly *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance*, and Mikhail Bakhtin's writing on carnival and the carnivalesque.

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Introduction

In the most popular Spanish chivalric romance, Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo's *Amadís de Gaula*, the titular hero founds a utopic community of knights and ladies on his newly acquired Insola Firme. The island is not only the achievement of a wish-fulfillment fantasy, with its incredible wealth and a happy-to-oblige native workforce, but it is also a space in which the chivalric ideals of heroism, honor, and courtly love are fully achieved. And yet, shortly after becoming the ruler of Insola Firme, Amadís begins to look for excuses to abandon it.

While *Amadís de Gaula* is a highly utopic text, it contains a recessive dystopianism which is crucial to its structure. The chivalric romance is a medieval variant of the romance, which follows the adventures of knights errant and celebrates chivalric values of prowess, loyalty, courtesy and love, but a similar combination of a dominant utopianism and a recessive dystopianism can be found in other types of romances, such as the Russian socialist romance, which promotes the ideals of socialism and encourages revolutionary activity. A dominant and recessive utopianism/dystopianism also exists in the picaresque, which first appears on the literary scene in Spain, with the anonymous *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554). In this original form, the picaresque is a sort of mirror image of the chivalric romance, and *Amadís de Gaula* in particular. It features a roguish protagonist that most often narrates his or her escapades in the first person, and through interactions with a variety of characters gives an unflattering portrait of his or her society. Whereas the romance is a predominantly utopic mode, the picaresque is primarily dystopic, and just as there is a certain dystopianism present in the romance, there is a utopic undercurrent to the picaresque structure.

The term "utopia" was coined by Thomas More, and is a play on words combining the Greek *eutopos*, meaning "good place" and *outopos*, meaning "no place". Its very name, therefore, defines a "utopia" as both a good place and a non-existent place, pointing to the ultimate impossibility of establishing a perfect society. The pun already indicates that the authors of utopias may not consider their creations to be feasible in real life, and in fact, all or parts of their constructions may be ironic[1]. Regardless, the primary function of a utopia is to serve as a criticism of real-world societies.

A "utopia" is, in its simplest definition, an imagined place with a sociopolitical system that is somehow better than that of the author. The term may also be applied to a genre of texts that describe such places and social systems. Michel Foucault defines utopias as "sites with no real place . . . They present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down, but in any case these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces" ("Of Other Spaces" 24). Even though a crucial part of this definition is the unrealness of the space of a utopia, there is an emphasis on utopia being a site. Therefore, a strictly utopic text primarily describes such an imagined site and its sociopolitical system. While not all the texts examined in this project can be categorized as strictly belonging in the genre of utopian or dystopian literature, as presenting a site where society is either perfected or shown in its worst form is not necessarily their primary function, they nonetheless contain utopic and dystopic aspects[2].

[1]In fact, whether Thomas More's account of a perfect society in *Utopia* is in earnest or if it is a satire is a topic under continuous critical discussion. For example, it seems unlikely that the suggestion that families that grow over sixteen members simply give a few of their children away to a smaller family is in earnest. The reader should therefore probably disregard at least some of Hythloday's narrative as coming from an unreliable narrator, or else interpret it as being tongue-in-cheek.

[2] In this dissertation, the adjectives "utopic" and "utopian" are used interchangeably, as are the words "dystopic" and "dystopian," to signify that the term they modify contains a presence of utopianism or dystopianism, respectively.

Some critics, including Lyman Tower Sargent, use "utopia" as a more general term, meaning "a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space" ("The Three Faces" 9), and utilize the term "eutopia or positive utopia" to designate "a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably better than the society in which that reader lived". (9) I do not make such a distinction, but use "utopia" as Sargent would use "eutopia."

Sargent defines "utopianism" as "social dreaming – the dreams and nightmares that concern the ways in which groups of people arrange their lives" ("The Three Faces" 3). Because Sargent uses the term "utopia" as encompassing both "eutopia" and "dystopia," he speaks here of both dreams and nightmares. However, because I subscribe the somewhat simplified division – "utopia" and "dystopia" as contrasting terms, excluding "eutopia" - in this dissertation, "utopianism" refers to social dreams, and "dystopianism" to social nightmares.

"Social dreaming" may be more or less explicit in the texts examined here, and much of this project is concerned with identifying and describing the various ways in which the texts' utopianism and dystopianism – social dreaming and social nightmares - are expressed. Some of the texts feature utopic sites within them, and sections of those texts are closer to what is commonly referred to as utopian literature, as they feature descriptions of a utopia as a separate locale. However, beyond the existence of such a site, and even when such a site does not exist within the text, the element of social dreaming is still present.

Often, this means that I use the term "utopianism" to refer to such aspects of the texts that signify the belief in or the pursuit of a sociopolitical system in which "human relations are organized more perfectly than in the author's community" (Suvin 128), even

if there is no explicit description of such a system or of the space in which it would exist. Although within a particular text, utopianism may be expressed through individual desire, it is always political, and is therefore more than mere individual wish-fulfillment. Occasionally, and especially in the Spanish picaresque, the utopianism in the texts is a subtle undercurrent, and the utopia is neither explicitly described nor pursued, and may even be rejected or abandoned. Nonetheless, the pícaro's actions indicate a certain belief in an alternative political system, which is at the root of his motivation, and which would be, from the protagonist's point of view, an improvement on the system in which he exists.

Although in contrast to utopias, dystopias depict worlds significantly worse than those the author inhabits, they nonetheless fulfill a similar function. They are distorted mirrors of real-life societies which exaggerate the negative aspects of their models, thereby criticizing them. In contrast to utopia, the term "dystopia" combines the Greek prefix *dys*, meaning bad, and *topos*, meaning place. It is used to either denote such an imagined "bad place", or to refer to a genre of texts that describe such places or sociopolitical systems. As Sargent correctly points out, "dystopia is, in many cases, a warning, in the tradition of the jeremiad, that this is what will happen if we do not improve our behavior and change our economic/political/social system, with the implication that such change is possible" ("Five Hundred Years" 190). Alternatively, dystopias may reflect the idea that humans are incapable of creating a utopia (Sargent "Authority and Utopia" 578), and tell the story of a (usually imagined) failed attempt to establish a utopic society. "Dystopianism" is therefore primarily the description of a dystopia or a warning against it, or against sociopolitical trends and ideas that would lead to a dystopia. I also use the term "dystopianism" to refer to aspects of the texts which point to a sense of great moral, philosophical, or sociopolitical hopelessness or

corruption, as well as to those elements that reflect the idea that efforts to achieve a utopia are doomed to failure, or that any attempt to establish a utopia will instead result in a dystopia.

For the sake of clarity and in order to follow a logical thread of development, this dissertation begins with a chapter on a 16th century Spanish romance. However, the idea for it actually originated with a far later text – the «Великий инквизитор» ("Velikiĭ inkvizitor"; "The Grand Inquisitor") chapter in Fyodor Dostoevsky's 1880 novel *Братья Карамазовы* (*Brat'i͡a Karamazovy*; *The Brothers Karamazov*). The chapter is a pro-and-contra on the topic of free will, and the questionable utopianism of any system that offers comfort in exchange for freedom from choice. Most contemporary totalitarian science fiction dystopias[3] can trace their roots to Dostoevsky's "The Grand Inquisitor". The genre as we know it today was pioneered by Yevgeny Zamyatin in his novel *Мы* (*My*; We), which was clearly influenced by Dostoevsky's writing, and which in turn inspired the most famous example of 20th century dystopian literature, George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Wanner 78).

Dostoevsky chooses the city of Seville at the time of the Spanish Inquisition as his setting. Of course, he constructs this version of Seville in order to achieve a particular effect, not to provide a realistic description of life in 16th century Spain. Nonetheless, Dostoevsky's idea of the Spanish Inquisition continues to inspire the contemporary science fiction dystopia, which tends to depict spaces in which alternative points of view are unwelcome and difference is cause for destruction. Because a direct line can be drawn between Dostoevsky and Zamyatin, and Zamyatin and Orwell – two authors whose work

[3] A subgenre of the science fiction dystopia, which imagines a totalitarian government, and most often focuses on questions of free will and individualism.

in this subgenre is canonical – Dostoevsky's vision of the Spanish Inquisition has had an undeniable influence on contemporary science fiction dystopia.

Since the idea of the Spanish Inquisition haunts contemporary dystopic fiction, I was initially curious as to the kind of texts that Spanish authors actually produced during the time of the Inquisition. I found that the dystopic literature of Early Modern Spain consists primarily of picaresque texts[4]. The next question that arose was about an apparent anomaly: why do the protagonists of these highly dystopic texts appear to maintain an optimistic, even utopic worldview, built on the consistent underlying belief that their world will change for the better? It was while examining this question that I found that the chivalric romance, of which the picaresque is a distorted mirror image, features a similar anomaly: it is predominantly utopic, but with an undercurrent of dystopianism.

While romance and picaresque texts are not commonly categorized as utopic and dystopic, I contend that not only are their dominant utopianism/dystopianism distinctive traits of each mode, but that their recessive undertones - dystopic in the romance, and utopic in the picaresque – are indispensable to their structure. This recessive/dominant pattern has not been explored, even though it is present in a variety of romance and picaresque texts from different national literatures and time periods. Studying the ways in which various authors utilize the interplay of utopianism and dystopianism allows for a clearer understanding of the texts' relationships with the contexts in which they were created and of their overall intentions. It also aids in outlining the relationships between the different texts, and between the romance and picaresque modes in general.

[4] Fernando de Rojas's *La Celestina* can also be categorized as dystopic, and while not a picaresque *per se*, the text features protopicaresque characters.

This project is necessarily limited in scope, and only considers representative romance and picaresque texts produced in Early Modern Spain and 19th and 20th century Russia. In spite of these limitations, it is my goal to at least begin a consideration of these connected modes as parts of a greater whole, without disregarding the particularities of the individual texts. My analysis of the relationship between the picaresque and the romance, and their interrelated utopianism and dystopianism is primarily informed by Northtrop Frye's thinking about romance, especially as expressed in *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance*, as well as by Mikhail Bakhtin's work on carnival and the carnivalesque.

In *The Secular Scripture*, Frye refers to romance as "man's vision of his own life as a quest" (15). The heroes of romance go through a sort of cyclical movement, descending into what Frye calls a "night world," that is, the world of painful adventures, and then return to "the idyllic world," the world of happiness and security (54). Throughout *The Secular Scripture*, Frye refers to texts as different as chivalric romances, detective stories, Westerns, and science fiction as romances. Seemingly disparate, these texts are all ultimately quest narratives that feature heroes who are representative of a set of ideals, and who are contrasted with villains that in some way obstruct their quest.

The romance is "nearest of all literary forms to the wish-fulfillment dream" (Frye *Anatomy* 186), as it describes "an idealized world: in romance heroes are brave, heroines beautiful, villains villainous, and the frustrations, ambiguities, and embarrassments of ordinary life are made little of" (151). There is a utopianism inherent in the romance, since it imagines a world that is in some way better than the one the author inhabits.

While the romance presents an idealized society, the form that this society takes differs from one text to another since, as Frye rightly points out, a utopic text "contrasts, implicitly or explicitly, the writer's own society with the more desirable one he

describes" ("Varieties" 325). Therefore, *Amadís* imagines an idealized version of feudalism based on chivalric ideals, while Nikolai Chernyshevsky's utopic socialist romance, *Что дeлать?* (*Chto delat'?*; *What Is to Be Done?*), presents the achievement of communism. The texts may, as is the case in the romances examined here, offer a site which is the ultimate expression of their utopianism: Insola Firme in the case of *Amadís*, and the dreamscape of Vera Pavlova's fourth dream in *What Is to Be Done?*. In these cases, the utopia is presented quite explicitly, as a section of each text describes a society that is somehow better than the one the author inhabits. However, the texts' utopianism is not only presented spatially, nor is it relegated solely to these particular locations. Instead, the texts allow for various aspects of the wish-fulfillment fantasy to unfold throughout, repeatedly glossing over the inherent contradictions of a particular group's ideology, and presenting it as superior. The romance's utopianism lies primarily in its recurrent demonstrations that any issues that arise within it can be resolved – in the case of the chivalric romance, by a strict adherence to the chivalric code, and in the socialist romance, by acting in accordance with the philosophy of rational egoism.

In contrast to the romance, the picaresque is primarily dystopic, as it presents a society that is dysfunctional and corrupt at every level. Keith Booker defines dystopian literature as "that literature which situates itself in direct opposition to utopian thought, warning against the negative consequences of arrant utopianism" (*Dystopian Literature* 3). Each dystopia therefore tends to refute a certain type of utopia. Because utopias are created to contrast the society in which they are produced, dystopias themselves are in conversation both with the utopia, and the society on which it is based. Therefore, as Booker correctly points out,

> dystopian literature generally also constitutes a critique of existing social conditions or political systems, either through the critical examination of the utopian premises upon which these conditions and systems are based or through

> the imaginative extension of those conditions and systems into different contexts that more clearly reveal their flaws and conditions. (*Dystopian Literature* 3)

Instead of presenting an idealized world that promotes the values and ideals of a ruling or ascendant class, the dystopian writer imagines a worst-case scenario version of such a world.

In Frye's view, the picaresque belongs in the myth of irony/satire, the central theme of which is "the disappearance of the heroic" (*Anatomy of Criticism* 228), and which "is best approached as a parody of romance; the application of romantic mythical forms to a more realistic content which fits them in unexpected ways" (223). Though the details may change depending on the context in which the text surfaces, works as different from each other as Miguel de Cervantes's "Coloquio de los perros" ("The Dogs' Colloquy"), William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, and Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* may all be considered picaresque texts.

The picaresque is a carnivalesque inversion of the romance. It inverts and mocks the romance's lofty ideals, reverses hierarchies, and directs its derisive laughter at all sections of society. Although Bakhtin states that carnival itself is incompatible with satire, he also insists on a distinction between carnival proper and the carnivalesque, which is an artistic mode that reflects the spirit of carnival. The picaresque exemplifies that satire, though perhaps not present in carnival itself, can in fact reflect the spirit of carnival, and therefore be carnivalesque. While the texts engage in a sort of social criticism, they direct it at everyone, and do not place their protagonists at a moral high ground. There is a sense of corruption in all institutions and characters, including the narrator (usually, the pícaro himself). Although the pícaro may attempt to justify his own behavior or suggest a change in his own character, he does so while narrating tales which implicate him in the general disorder and immorality. Therefore, even if the protagonist believes himself above the fray, the text overall does not present him as such.

This dissertation focuses on two different time periods and national literatures: Early Modern Spain and 19th/20th century Russia, and it functions in large part as a case study. While a similar project focusing on different forms of the romance and of the picaresque from yet another national literature or time period would certainly be possible, these particular moments in Spanish and Russian literary history provide fruitful parallels for a study of this kind.

Both Spain and Russia boast a native picaresque tradition. The first Russian picaresque texts appear in the 17th century[5], in large part as carnivalesque inversions of saints' lives. For instance, while saints are called on their religious quests by God, in "Повесть о Савве Грудцыне" ("Povest′ o Savve Grudt͡syne"; "The Tale of Savva Grudtsyn"), the protagonist travels with the devil himself. Although the carnivalesque and picaresque nature of these early texts would merit their own investigation, such an examination is outside of the scope of this project, which focuses later picaresque texts that were influenced by Western, including Spanish models, that find their way to Russia in the 18th century.

In the 19th century, Russian intellectuals were familiar with the Spanish Golden Age, and Cervantes in particular. Pushkin, for instance, was influenced by Spanish literature and theater, and his work includes Spanish themes, including his own version of *Don Juan*, a short play titled «Каменный гость» ("Kamennyĭ gost´"; "The Stone Guest") (Weiner 87-89) Turgenev's "Hamlet and Don Quixote" speech codified the Romantic interpretation of the incredibly popular *Don Quijote* (*Don Quixote*) that was prevalent in Russia. Intellectuals and groups of often opposing ideological leanings all identified with Don Quixote, as a self-sacrificing idealist with a positive social mission (Bagno "El

[5] For more detail on the early Russian picaresque, see Marcia A. Morris's "Russia, the Road and the Rogue: The Genesis of a National Tradition."

Quijotismo ruso" 122). Dostoevsky was particularly familiar with Cervantes's work, which he read in French and Russian translation (88). He even largely based the protagonist of his novel *Идиот* (*Idiot; The Idiot*) on Cervantes's creation (Bagno "El Quijote en los borradores" 265). *Don Quixote* also had an undeniable influence on the Russian modern picaresque tradition, which I discuss in the fourth chapter.

Both the Spanish and the Russian context are moments of great socioeconomic change. In the Spanish context, between the publication of Rodríguez de Montalvo's and Quevedo's texts, Spain grows to be the greatest empire in the world, but the very influx of riches from the colonies soon causes it to crumble economically. *Amadís* promotes a chivalric fantasy, which could be projected onto the New World, while the picaresque captures the everyman's experience of the deteriorating economy and existing social relations. Similarly, and perhaps more dramatically, the period between the publication of Chernyshevsky's *What Is to Be Done?* and Venedikt Erofeev's *Москва - Петушки* (*Moskva-Petushki; Moscow to the End of the Line*), sees the change from an imperial to a socialist Russia, as the two texts reflect the dream of communism, and the disappointment at the failure of that dream.

In the medieval romance, the plot is "a ritualized action expressing the ascendancy of a horse-riding aristocracy. [The romances] also express that aristocracy's dreams of its own social function and the idealized acts of protection and responsibility it invokes to justify that function" (Frye *The Secular Scripture* 57). Although the military role of knights becomes increasingly obsolete as the centuries-long Reconquista ends in Spain, *Amadís* largely ignores the socioeconomic reality of Rodríguez de Montalvo's time, showcasing instead an economy that is an extension of the chivalric habitus. The text is set in a non-existent past: while it is supposed to take place in the first century after Christ, the world depicted bears little resemblance with that historical period. Lands and

riches can be earned through battle and an adherence to the chivalric code, and monetary economy is in its infancy. There are no tensions between different social classes, and those who seem to rise through the ranks on merit turn out to have been noble all along, thereby reasserting the importance of high birth and justifying noble privilege. At a time when the nobility has lost much of its political influence to a strong monarchy, *Amadís* shows a knight overshadowing a king, and becoming his moral and social superior.

However, the feudalism that the text describes and promotes did not match the socioeconomic reality of the period in which the text was published. Early forms of capitalism already begin to develop in Spain in the 14th and 15th centuries, evident in "el tipo social del mercader de los últimos siglos medievales, en las nuevas técnicas mercantiles y financieras . . . y en las asociaciones para empresas capitalistas" (Valdeavellano *Curso* 289). For the most part, Rodríguez de Montalvo's chivalric romance ignores the emerging bourgeoisie, and places wealth firmly in the hands of the nobility. Unlike the characters in Amadís, not all the Spanish nobles were wealthy, and their only valuable possession may have been good birth, which, among other privileges, freed them from paying taxes. In addition, nobility could be, and was, conferred on commoners, but in Rodríguez de Montalvo's text, blood ultimately shows, and true nobility is a combination of birthright and merit.

While nascent capitalism is certainly a consideration in the Spanish texts, the change to a new economic system was much faster and more dramatic in Russia. *What Is to Be Done?* is what Frye refers to as a "kidnapped romance," that is, a text in which "[r]omance formulas [are] used to reflect certain ascendant religious or social ideals" (*The Secular Scripture* 29-30). Instead of justifying the position of an existing elite, the novel looks towards the future, promoting a new social and economic vision, as well as outlining the characteristics of the type of people who could be the new leaders.

Chernyshevsky's text galvanized a generation of revolutionaries by expressing the ideas of socialism through the novel form. It provided characters that readers could identify with and emulate, and painted a vivid image of a new world for which readers would long. While this looking toward the future differs from the chivalric romanticized view of the past, both *Amadís* and *What Is to Be Done?* invite their readers to imagine a better world, in which they can be the heroes. The historical moments in question are particularly productive for such an imagining, as the Spanish readers look towards a literal New (to them) World, and the Russian readers look towards a new political and economic system, which Russia hoped to export to the rest of the world, thus effectively colonizing it.

The picaresque in both contexts responds to major socioeconomic shifts and the disappointment that accompanied them. While the New World initially brought Spain great wealth, the economy soon began to suffer. The crown incurred debts to finance wars, and the value of Spain's currency steadily decreased, so that by the 1580s, the economy was beginning to fail (Phillips and Phillips 198). Although tax revenues and treasures coming in from America were significant, the economic depression increased, aided by a decline in population as a result of epidemics and the Morisco expulsion (1609-1614), migration to the Americas, and warfare (218-220). This was the paradox of Spain: "that it was poor because it was rich, that it had gold and silver in abundance and yet it had none" (Elliott "The Spanish Peninsula" 435).

The two opposing literary visions – the chivalric and the picaresque - reflect the great socioeconomic shifts of this period in Spanish history. Imitating the general structure of the romance – a roaming protagonist on a quest, who encounters various antagonists on his way – the Spanish picaresque largely counters the chivalric ideology. The world of the picaresque is completely void of the chivalric ethos, and the characters

who are representative of knighthood and nobility are far from idealized. Instead of presenting a wish-fulfillment fantasy, the picaresque focuses on a low-class individual and puts socioeconomic problems front and center.

To the chivalric fantasy of a well-ordered hierarchical society in which everyone is happy in his or her place, the Spanish picaresque juxtaposes a mass of socioeconomic problems, as it focuses on the urban centers and acknowledges the increasing possibility of social mobility. Because it showcases issues such as urbanization, wealth inequality, corruption, and, indirectly, the Inquisition, the Spanish picaresque may seem to be more socially engaged. However, it offers no solutions to the problems it presents. While it does not shy away from representing all manners of abuse and vice, it mocks all of society and the texts' message is, therefore, contradictory. While the pícaro may attempt to present himself as having grown or learned from his youthful mistakes, and thus exempt himself from the overall social corruption, his self-presentation is a relatively poor attempt to salvage his image, as it contradicts his actions. Lazarillo's deal with the archpriest at the end of his narrative is a clear example of such a contradiction, which indicates that the authorial intention is to have the audience laugh at the pícaro's opportunism and at his failures, even if the protagonist does not laugh at himself. The Spanish picaresque ultimately presents its hero as the worst sort of social climber, and thereby reaffirms the importance of social hierarchy. In the light of the pícaros' moral failures, the democratic undertone of their ambitions is presented as humorously unsavory, and perhaps even dangerous.

Erofeev finishes his Soviet-era picaresque in 1970, over a hundred years after *What Is to Be Done?*. The revolution that Chernyshevshy had anticipated had long since occurred, and although *Moscow to the End of the Line* carnivalizes the Russian revolution and its aftermath, the main focus of the novel is the everyday experience of the people

living in the Soviet Union in the 1960s. There are, therefore, few references to the intermittent period, and the mass terror of the Stalin era. Instead, the text reflects the poor living conditions and the everyday indignities of the Soviet everyman.

After the "Thaw" of the Nikita Khrushchev period (mid-1950s to mid-1960s), during which censorship and repression were relaxed and the gulag came to an end, Leonid Brezhnev reintroduced certain Stalinist policies, and limited free cultural expression. In 1966, the "dissemination of 'anti-Soviet' slander in any form" (Hanson 298) was made illegal. An atmosphere similar to that of the Inquisition, of paranoia and distrust, is palpable in *Moscow to the End of the Line*, as the protagonist is pursued and murdered by a group he had considered his guardian angels.

While the economy was improving after the economic disaster of Khrushchev's ineffective initiatives, and the increasingly urban population was moving from communal apartments to their own living spaces, the USSR was far behind Europe and America, where the standard of living was at a completely different level (Bushkovitch 408-411). Goods that were in existence were hard to distribute, therefore most could not access them, and everyday items were sometimes completely inaccessible for months at a time (Hanson 302). Erofeev implicitly juxtaposes the Soviet reality of "*дефицит*" (defit͡sit; deficit) of the Brezhnev era with the promises of abundance made in *What Is to Be Done?*, and his drunken characters with Chernyshevsky's new men and women. His text mocks the failing central planning efforts, and job security of the era, which meant that those that were politically loyal would keep their positions until they retired or died, resulting in overwhelming inefficiency (Hanson 301-302). Erofeev thus raises similar issues as does the Spanish picaresque: urbanization, corruption, and forced orthodoxy – though this time, political instead of religious.

My reading of the Spanish chivalric romance was most influenced by Michael Harney's extensive writings on the subject, and particularly his meticulous historicizing of *Amadís*. In the Russian context, I found Andrew M. Drozd's work on *What Is to Be Done* most interesting, as he reads the text as a work of literature and not merely political propaganda. Although I disagree with much of his reading of the novel, his approach to the text was refreshing and inspiring. My understanding of the picaresque is shaped primarily by Peter Dunn's work, *Spanish Picaresque Fiction: A New Literary History*, in which he asks that picaresque works be read "free from our acquired generic expectations" (17). His suggestion to not view the picaresque as a genre[6] with a set number of features that a text must contain to be considered picaresque was freeing and particularly useful in considering the apparent dissonance between the Spanish and the Russian picaresque (particularly as the protagonists of the Spanish texts aim to rise through a rigid social hierarchy, while the Soviet pícaro has no such aspirations or capability). I have also followed Dunn's example in choosing the three Spanish texts that he names as canonical - *Lazarillo de Tormes*, *Guzmán de Alfarache* and *El buscón* (*The Swindler*) - as the representative texts for the Spanish picaresque. Francisco Rico's focus on the picaresque as autobiography in *La novela picaresca y el punto de vista* encouraged me to consider the implications of the first-person narration in these texts, even if I disagree with parts of his interpretation. While the Russian picaresque has not yet received the same amount of attention as the Spanish, Marcia A. Morris's work was an invaluable introduction to the history of the picaresque mode in Russia.

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[6] Claudio Guillén, for instance, provides a list of characteristics necessary to consider a text picaresque in "Toward a Definition of the Picaresque." However, in my view, lacking one of these characteristics (for example, not being a pseudoautobiography, or not being loosely strung together from seemingly disconnected episodes) does not necessarily disqualify a text from consideration, if it has other picaresque qualities, such as a wandering roguish hero whose adventures introduce the reader to a variety of characters that are representative of different social groups or classes.

In terms of situating the Spanish romance and picaresque texts in their historical contexts, Fernand Braudel's work on the Mediterranean during Philip II and Luis García de Valdeavellano's work on Spanish institutions and social classes were particularly helpful. For establishing the Russian historical context, I referred most often to the multi-volume *The Cambridge History of Russia*, especially the volumes edited by Ronald Grigor Suny and Dominic Lieven. Additionally, Stephen Greenblatt's work on self-fashioning and Erving Goffman's *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* have informed my views on the ways in which authors construct their characters, as well as the ways in which those characters function within the texts and present themselves to the reader. Moreover, in addition to Bakhtin's work on the carnivalesque, the third chapter also refers to Michael André Bernstein's *Bitter Carnival*, which discusses dark aspects of carnival and the carnivalesque. Bernstein focuses especially on violence and the idea of throwing off the constraints of morality, particularly in the kind of carnivalesque literature that does not make frequent use of humor.

Because Spain is the birthplace of the picaresque, and the picaresque is in part an answer to the popularity of the chivalric romance, the first chapter discusses Spain's most popular chivalric romance, Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo's 16th century version of *Amadís de Gaula*, ignoring earlier types of the romance, such as the Greek romance, as well as earlier chivalric romances from the French or English traditions. In this chapter, I explore the text's utopic spaces and the many dystopic interruptions that occur in them. *Amadís* is set in an ahistorical time and a universe at once both real and imagined, as its geography is a mixture of real and fantastical places. The stability of the chivalric romance's honor-based chivalric system in which everybody is satisfied in their place is repeatedly threatened, giving the knight unlimited opportunities to restore order and display both his own superiority, and the benefits of chivalry-based feudalism. As the

knight travels through these spaces, he constructs the utopia not through description, but through action, marking each locale with an incident. While these threats and conflicts are always resolved, they seem to be inexhaustible, pointing to the futility of the knight's struggle. The constant interruptions in the predominately utopic space point to the text's recessive dystopianism, which is necessary to its structure.

If Amadís were to somehow run out of threats and create an environment in which everyone fully subscribes to chivalric ideals, he would lose his purpose in the text. Therefore, once Amadís acquires Insola Firme and the island achieves its utopic potential, becoming the physical representation of chivalric ideals, he quickly looks for ways to abandon it. Without the knight at its center, the chivalric romance itself would cease to exist, so the text relies on a static plot, not allowing any of the hero's actions to have a lasting effect on the setting, and underlying all his efforts with dystopic futility. This subtle dystopianism thus allows for the story to continue ad infinitum, and even as one hero retires from his role, another one rises to take his place, announcing future adventures. Dystopic disruptions are, therefore, the backbone of the chivalric romance narrative, and are intended to simultaneously question and reassert its overall utopianism. The same basic structure is evident in modern iterations of narratives based in chivalry, perhaps most obviously in the modern superhero genre of graphic novels, comics, and films.

The second chapter discusses the Spanish picaresque, concentrating largely on the anonymous *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554) as a dystopic carnivalesque inversion of the chivalric romance and of Rodríguez de Montalvo's *Amadís de Gaula* in particular. There are also frequent references to Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache* (1599) and Francisco de Quevedo's *El buscón* (1626). These Spanish picaresque texts simultaneously invoke and invert the tropes of the chivalric romance, dragging

everything downward, into a space of corporeality, poverty, corruption and materialism. While it abandons the lofty values and ideals of chivalry for their opposites (loyalty for betrayal; largesse for avarice; courtesy for crudeness; sincerity for dishonesty), the picaresque reinforces its interest in everything low by focusing on bodily needs such as eating, digesting, vomiting, and defecating. This focus on the body, and especially its lower parts, corresponds to a focus on the lower stratum of society.

This chapter explores how the pícaro's implicit utopianism, associated with his constant reinventions of the self, contrasts with that of the romance. The Spanish picaresque, while humorous, is primarily dystopic, as all of the institutions and relationships present in it are violent, corrupt, and dysfunctional. The pícaros' first person narratives reflect a sense of panopticonism[7] which, without addressing it directly, conveys the experience of living in an Inquisitional context. The overall satisfaction with one's social position that is a feature of the chivalric romance disappears, but the characters are faced with a social structure that does not encourage social mobility. The pícaros find that the only way to advance in their dysfunctional environments is to employ immoral and illegal means. The picaresque thus mocks the idealism of the romance by showing the pícaro advancing in his fortunes (albeit temporarily) by performing the antithesis of chivalry.

The Spanish pícaro is driven by a relentless materialism, at odds with the knight's supposed altruism. While his vision is very narrow, the pícaro's individualism presupposes a possibility of social ascent for anyone. This recessive utopianism of the picaresque is at the root of the pícaro's limited social ascent, as he is able to fashion himself into different personas and thereby take advantage of unanticipated openings in

[7] "Panopticonism" here is used in the Foucauldian sense to denote conditions in which the subject is always under surveillance, or at least *believes* that he may be observed at any time.

the strict social hierarchy. As the pícaro, in Erving Goffman's terms, performs his role, he draws attention to others' performances as well. If everyone is merely playing a role, the pícaro, who demonstrates an ability to don different masks successfully, exemplifies the possibility of anyone occupying any position. Additionally, the pícaros' hilariously pathetic attempts at social ascent are a parody of the knight's own hidden opportunism.

In his focus on social advancement without concern for morals or ideals, the Spanish pícaro bears a remarkable resemblance to Machiavelli's Prince. However, in spite of the pícaro's ability to trick his way into new opportunities and his relentless self-fashioning, he is never allowed to completely change his fortune, and is always eventually dragged back down. While its carnivalesque atmosphere promises a more democratic structure – and delivers in the dystopic sense, as nobody appears to be above the fray – ultimately, the Spanish picaresque rejects its own protagonist and with him, the type of democratic utopianism that he represents.

The third chapter focuses on what I call the socialist romance, exemplified in Nikolai Chernyshevsky's 1863 novel *What Is to Be Done?*. The socialist romance differs from the chivalric romance in that it is a kidnapped romance. While the chivalric romance is based in ideals of an already ruling class, the socialist romance promotes the ideals of an up-and-coming social group. Instead of justifying the privileges of an existing elite, Chernyshevsky's text criticizes that group's ideology and institutions on nearly every front, including family, marriage, and the economy, and suggests an opposing vision as a real possibility.

Therefore, this socialist romance also differs from the chivalric romance examined in the first chapter in terms of its intention. While every romance is undoubtedly political, *What Is to Be Done?* is extraordinary in that it is a call for action that was in fact answered, as the text became highly influential and inspired a generation

of revolutionaries, being a major part of the ideological impetus for the Russian Revolution (Frank 68). Yet, even though the text is a socialist romance which promotes ideals in conflict with that of the chivalric romance – equality instead of hierarchy, egoism in place of altruism – there is undoubtedly still a presence of the chivalric ideology and familiar chivalric romance tropes, especially in the way that Chernyshevsky writes his heroes. This affinity with an older form of the romance aids in understanding Chernyshevsky's novel not as a parody of romance, but merely as a new expression of it, in which the goal of the quest is the revolution. While, due to the political climate of the time, he could not refer to the revolution explicitly, Chernyshevsky describes a post-revolutionary world in Vera Pavlova's fourth dream, which is a physical representation of the socialist ideology.

After exploring the ways in which Chernyshevsky puts forth his utopic vision, this chapter examines Fyodor Dostoevsky's and Yevgeny Zamyatin's literary responses to his novel that build on the dystopianism implicit in his text. While their carnivalesque dystopias are not picaresque, they are similar in the sense that they are dystopic rebuttals of the romances' utopianism. In *Записки из подполья* (*Zapiski iz podpol' i͡a*; *Notes from Underground*) and "The Grand Inquisitor," Dostoevsky takes issue with the philosophy of rational egoism, which states that people ultimately act in their own self-interest, and that the correct action is the one that brings most long-term benefits. A rational egoist sees that he or she benefits from a prosperous community, and therefore tends to choose the action which leads to the common good. In Dostoevsky's view, people will continue to make choices harmful to themselves, if only to assert their right to make such choices. He rejects a materialist utopia in which comfort and a superficial contentment are valued above all things, and are achieved at the expense of free will and individuality. Similarly, Zamyatin imagines a world run on absolute rationality as the antithesis to a utopia, since

irrationality and desire are indispensable to the human experience. There can be no revolution that would usher in the golden age, as there can be no final revolution, and therefore no achievement of a final, unchanging utopia.

The fourth and final chapter begins with a brief overview of the history of the Russian picaresque, with a special focus on the most famous Russian picaresque, Nikolai Gogol's 1842 novel *Мёртвые души* (*Mërtvye dushi*; *Dead Souls*). However, the chapter primarily looks at a Soviet picaresque, Erofeev's *Moscow to the End of the Line*, which was first published in 1973 and which takes a carnivalesque approach to the socialist ideals presented in Chernyshevsky's work.

The text is a record of a failed journey from Moscow, the dystopic site within the novel, to the utopic and unreachable Petushki, which unlike the collective utopia of the socialist romance, is a personal paradise. Erofeev's pícaro differs from his predecessors in that he does not pursue an improved economic or social status. This change is logical in the context in which the novel was written and the idealism of Chernyshevsky's *What Is to Be Done?*, in which everyone is nominally equal. Yet, unlike the new men and women that Chernyshevsky believed would lead the revolution and inhabit the Crystal Palace, Erofeev shows that equality is achieved only at the level of the lowest common denominator. The socialist ideal of equality and contentment is thus shattered, as the text is populated entirely with poor, lazy, and despairing alcoholics, who gladly exploit any opportunity, but are also constantly exploited by the State.

While the Spanish pícaros' itineration was mostly haphazard, Venya, the protagonist of *Moscow to the End of the Line*, has a clear goal in mind – reaching Petushki, in which he could live a happier life with his beloved. This utopia is described

in paradisiacal terms, and is contrasted to the decaying urban environment of Moscow. Still, throughout the narrative, there are indications that Venya will never reach his destination, and indeed, his journey brings him back to Moscow where he is forced to face the Kremlin – the symbol of state power – and where he is finally murdered. Both the means of his journey – a train, which travels on a track and only stops at predetermined stations at fixed times, and is in itself an enclosed space – and the fact that he never arrives at his destination, are a commentary on the very limited social and spatial mobility available to the citizens of the Soviet Union. As the text draws to a close, the utopic Petushki begins to blend with the dystopic Moscow, one becoming the other. Erofeev thus asserts that there is no utopia that would not turn into a dystopia. The pícaro's inability to escape Moscow not only confirms the failures of utopianism, but asserts that there is no path at all to a better place.

Unless otherwise noted, the translations used in this work are published translations and their authorship is noted in the footnotes. Cyrillic script is used for Russian quotations, but the titles of Russian works are also transliterated in parentheses. I am using the standard Library of Congress transliteration, though for the last names of authors, I use the spelling that is most commonly used in English, even if it does not comply with the Library of Congress transliteration system.

Chapter One: The Interplay of Utopia and Dystopia in the Spanish Chivalric Romance

Chivalric romances are fictitious biographies that follow the itineration of knights errant, who represent the idealized qualities of heroism, honor, and courtly love. The books' structure tends to be episodic, as the knight encounters and engages with various adversaries, and has a series of adventures. Although *Libro del caballero Zifar* (*The Book of the Knight Zifar*) was the first Spanish chivalric romance, *Amadís de Gaula*, written in its extant form by Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo, is generally considered the most popular and influential example of the genre. With its publication begins "a revival in the Spanish Peninsula, almost entirely within the limits of the sixteenth century, of a class of literature which had originated, flourished, and declined, at a much earlier period elsewhere" (Thomas 3). This belated surge in popularity is likely connected to Fernando and Isabel's unification of Spain, which led to a more extravagant courtly life and thus aided the development of Spain's own romances of chivalry (Eisenberg 30).

As Daniel Eisenberg notes:

> It would be difficult to exaggerate the popularity of Rodríguez de Montalvo's *Amadís* in sixteenth-century Spain. It had far and away the largest number of editions and copies printed, and has been, from its publication, the most widely read Spanish romance of chivalry, a distinction it holds to the present day. (31)

Amadís was a true bestseller in its time, published in nineteen editions in the sixteenth century alone (Lucía Megías 314). It defined the format of the chivalric romance in Spain, and later works followed its pattern with minor changes (Eisenberg 31). Because of its influence on its later congeners, as well as its unmatched popularity, this study

treats Rodríguez de Montalvo's *Amadís de Gaula* as the exemplary text of the Spanish chivalric romance.

The popularity of the chivalric romance in Spain is clearly indicated by the numerous continuations and imitations of Rodríguez de Montalvo's version of *Amadís*. There were twelve books in total in the *Amadís* cycle, written by different authors, but narrating the adventures of knights of the same family[8]. The main plot running through the length of Rodríguez de Montalvo's *Amadís* focuses on the hero's relationship with his beloved Oriana, and her father, king Lisuarte[9]. The king's initially amicable relationship with Amadís deteriorates into the romance's central conflict. While the lovers desire marriage, Lisuarte attempts to force his daughter into a more appropriate, hypergamic match with the Roman Emperor. Once Amadís's position improves to the point that he himself becomes a ruler, the rise of a new hero is announced. In the text's earlier version, Amadís dies at the hands of his son Esplandián, who does not recognize him[10] (Lida de Malkiel 285). However, Rodríguez de Montalvo reworks the older version, changes the ending and adds another book, continuing the story into a fifth volume, *Sergas de Esplandián* (*The Exploits of Esplandián*). In this version of *Amadís*, Urganda, the great enchantress in the text, denies the accuracy of the previous one, by telling Amadís: "los tus grandes hechos de armas por el mundo tan sonados muertos ante los suyos quedarán,

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[8] Garci Rodríguez Montalvo's four books of *Amadís de Gaula*; Garci Rodríguez Montalvo's *Sergas de Esplandián*; Páez de Ribera's *Florisando*, Feliciano de Silva's *Lisuarte de Grecia*, Juan Díaz's *Lisuarte de Grecia,* Feliciano de Silva's *Amadís de Grecia*, Feliciano de Silva's *Florisel de Niquea*, Feliciano de Silva's *Rogel de Grecia* (parts I and II); Pedro de Luján's Silves de la Selva.

[9] As Grace Sara Williams demonstrates, much of Amadís is derived primarily from French Arthurian romances of the 12th and 13th centuries, and in particular the Prose Lancelot. The source materials are adapted to the Spanish context, and so the husband-wife-lover triangle becomes father-daughter-lover, and the illicit nature of the relationship is softened, as the lovers are seen as married in the eyes of God.

[10] The death probably occurs at the end of Book III (Lida de Malkiel 285).

assí que por muchos que más no saben será dicho que el hijo al padre mató" (Rodríguez de Montalvo 1763). In line with this prophecy, *Sergas de Esplandián* focuses on the exploits of Amadís and Oriana's son, whose fame is destined to surpass his father's, and who thus kills Amadís only metaphorically.

The chivalric romance is predominantly utopic. The text presents an idealized version of feudalism based on ideals of chivalry, which is untroubled by contemporary socioeconomic concerns. Its economic system does not reflect the complications of nascent capitalism or the accompanying social changes. Amadís is allowed unlimited opportunities to do right and better his environment, repeatedly defeating enemies of the chivalry-based system in spite of dire odds. He has the capability to self-fashion and reinvent himself, becoming whomever he needs to be in the situation at hand. The locale in which this utopianism is most concentrated is the imaginary island Insola Firme, which becomes Amadís's domain.

However, there is an internal tension to the chivalric narrative, caused by the presence of recessive dystopic elements. The space of the romance, built on the chivalric ideal, is disturbed by a multitude of threats, which are the occasions for the hero's many adventures. They appear in a serial form and each is resolved before the knight can move on to the next one; but the knight's struggle is futile, as his work is never done. The constant interruptions in the predominately utopic space reveal the text's latent dystopianism, which is necessary to the romance. If all threats were somehow overcome, the text would no longer require a hero, that is, the chivalric romance itself would cease to exist. Instead, the text's plot is static, in the sense that none of the hero's actions have a

profound effect on his environment, as there are constantly new threats which lead to new adventures, and announces future conflicts, as well as future heroes.

At the center of the tension between utopia and dystopia is the figure of the knight errant, who strives to achieve complete utopia, but who only exists as an answer to constant dystopic interruptions. While the frequency of dystopic disruptions appears to challenge the utopianism of the chivalric romance, it allows the knight to showcase his strengths and the utopic potential of chivalry. The dangers that he faces are a reason to engage in chivalric behavior and exemplify the benefits of chivalry-based feudalism. Without danger, there would be no opportunities for betterment or redress, and no heroes – in a metanarrative sense, without dystopic futility, there would be no chivalric romance.

As Chapters 2 and 4 will demonstrate, a corresponding interplay between utopia and dystopia is present in the picaresque, as well. Although the picaresque is predominantly dystopic, it contains recessive utopic elements, which serve to question, but ultimately confirm the texts' dystopic nature. The pícaro's ability to self-fashion and his repeated attempts to improve his lot are necessary to highlight the impossibility of his individualist utopia. Although his actions suggest a belief that a man can truly ascend through personal merit, each of the pícaro's attempts is eventually thwarted, reminding him of his place at the bottom of the socioeconomic hierarchy.

CHIVALRY, KNIGHTHOOD AND NOBILITY

The first layer of *Amadís*'s utopianism is its reliance on an unattainable form of chivalry, a code of values rooted in prowess, loyalty, largesse, courtesy, and sincerity (Keen 2). The knights' primary duty is to maintain peace and protect the weak while

adhering to and promoting chivalric values. Each adventure is a test for the knight: he needs to right a wrong, without being discourteous, insincere, uncharitable, disloyal, or cowardly, especially to those who are vulnerable.

Drawing on Louis Marin's discussion in *Utopics: Spatial Play*, Michael Harney considers utopia as the setting in which "ideology is put to the test" ("Economy and Utopia" 393). It is not merely a specific locale within *Amadís* that is utopic, but rather, the entire narrative:

> The utopia of the chivalric romances, viewed in Marin's terms, encompasses not one central locale . . . It is, rather, the unbounded narrative space of notional topography, taken as a whole, which is utopic. The romances provide a mythogenetic playground for wishfulfillment – i.e., for an ideological resolution, on various levels, of the contradictions inherent in the *habitus* defended and justified by the fantasy" (Harney "Economy and Utopia" 393)

Bourdieu's conception of "*habitus*," which Harney invokes, is "the system of structured, structuring dispositions" (Bourdieu *The Logic* 52), which serves as a "strategy-generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations" (Bourdieu *Outline* 72). Habitus predisposes subjects to action informed by history, it is "embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history" (56). Informed by the chivalric habitus, the text forefronts the knights' role as defenders and highlights their supposed superiority, thereby justifying a privileged lifestyle.

Although they are closely related and often conflated, there is a difference between nobility and knighthood[11]. One can be born a noble, but must be made a knight;

[11] It is difficult to draw clear lines between the two. Valdeavellano notes: "Un largo proceso histórico había llegado a hacer de la caballería el arma fundamental en la guerra y la cualidad de combatiente montado determinó que el 'noble' de la Edad Media fuese un guerrero equipado con medios superiores de combate" (*Curso* 317). The exercise of arms was the only honorable occupation, and therefore knighthood begins to be conflated with nobility. The existence of squires, that is, men of noble birth who should become knights,

knighthood is therefore earned. Although one can also earn a title through marriage, service, wealth, etc., the chivalric romance does not demonstrate an interest in those who may ascend to the ranks of nobility from a lower estate[12]. Instead, it focuses on blood showing through deeds. That is, even though the chivalric romance makes much of personal merit, it is crucial that the knight *is* actually noble, and his nobility cannot be denied. Even though he starts out nameless, he will necessarily rise up to his rightful place. While this ascent may indicate that social mobility is desirable to some degree, in many ways the knight's merit turns out to be a consequence of his high birth. The chivalric romance thus equates nobility with knighthood and chivalry, and through this association, rationalizes a continued status privilege for a group whose actual function has changed. As noble privileges, such as tax exemption, were traditionally a compensation for the services of those who fight, maintaining an association with an imagined heroic past and with chivalric ideals reaffirms that privilege in the post-Reconquista context.

This is not to say that merit does not feature heavily in the chivalric romance, but while it does praise self-advancement in some ways – Amadís earns his territory and his lady through his own efforts – the text also acknowledges the power of lineage. After all,

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but have not been officially initiated into knighthood, shows the clear connection between nobility and knighthood, and allows for these aspirants to be differentiated from the common people (Duby *The Three Orders* 294-295). However, in Spain, there were also non-noble knights, or *caballeros villanos*, who shared many of the privileges – most notably, tax exemption – with the knights of high birth (Valdeavellano *Curso* 326-328). On the topic of *caballeros villanos*, see also Jesús D. Rodriguez-Velasco and Armand Arriaza.

[12] Still, perhaps that fantasy-fulfillment element did play a role in the romances being so popular. Because Amadís's extraordinary success is reached through both avenues – heredity and merit – those who had a title but no inheritance, could dream of achieving a higher economic status through great deeds or marrying up, while those whose had no title, or whose title was not to their liking, could perhaps dream that they, too, are long-lost sons of some great family.

Amadís turns out to be of royal blood. Rodríguez de Montalvo ignores neither Amadís's bloodline nor his merit; it is the combination of noble birth and works that allows for his social ascent. I. A. A. Thompson's study finds the same combination in *cartas de privilegio* which grant or confirm nobility status. The *cartas* feature a justification for nobility, which is based on the criteria of inheritance, service, and public recognition. Thompson finds that "'justifications', while accumulating as many grounds as were available to them, rested first and foremost on blood. In a significant number of cases no further justification was put forward" (381). Secondary to blood is service, but even "outstanding service could be envisaged not so much as a justification as a manifestation of nobility, the fruit by which the nobility of the family tree could be known" (382). In accordance with the understanding that true nobility is inherited through blood[13], a similar grafting of individual deeds to lineage is present in the case of Amadís, as well as his son Esplandián, the only knight superior to Amadís. Passing down through blood personal traits and abilities reasserts the noble estate's superiority and exclusivity.

In fact, chivalric romances follow a pattern that Rodriguez-Velasco refers to as chivalric fable:

> The plot (or rhetorical *argumentum*) usually involves a character who lacks name or fame and can only bear a blank coat of arms – with no heraldic signs. Either this character occupies a dubious or unknown position in his lineage, or his lineage has declined. In the fable he may earn a name, distinction, heraldic signs, fame, and status within the structure of power through an individual display of virtue dictated by a theoretically articulated chivalric model.

[13] As Elisa Ruiz García notes, "existió un prolongado debate en la sociedad entre los defensores de la nobleza adquirida por mérito personal frente a la heredada, no obstante, la concepción arcaizante predominaría." (254)

Amadís is an iteration of the chivalric fable. Starting out nameless, the hero reclaims his name and earns fame and status through the display of virtue. Overall, the chivalric fable promotes the idea that, "through a series of diversely codified political and moral acts, the subject can achieve social recognition and assume jurisdictional authority" (5). The text embodies in the knight errant the benefits of chivalry not only for the individual, but for society overall. *Amadís* therefore consists in large part of episodes in which the knight-errant faces and defeats any threats to the stability of the honor-based chivalric system.

PERSONAL MERIT

In the chivalric romance, merit is primarily associated with the hero's martial ability and with his fidelity as a lover. Much of the text is therefore concerned with establishing both Amadís's invincibility, and his loyalty to his lady. The question of indomitability is particularly important in the first two books, in which Amadís engages in battle after battle, repeatedly proving his superiority as a knight. Not only does he easily beat knights of great repute, thus growing in his fame, but he also wins against giants and monsters, such as the terrifying Endriago in Book III. While other characters may also be described in superlative terms – particularly the members of Amadís's family, such as his brothers Galaor and Florestán, as well as their father, king Perión, and even king Lisuarte – due to their close connection with the hero, their excellence serves to his credit, but never overshadows him.

Amadís's position as the ideal knight is stressed in particular in the supernatural test he goes through on Insola Firme, which serves as an objective measure of excellence and establishes a clear hierarchy among the most famous and admired knights. While one

part of the trial concerns the knights' fidelity to their ladies, they are also ranked based on their martial achievements. The design of this part of the trial is such that a knight cannot walk past a point which marks his achievements in relation to those of others, as its rule states: "D'aquí passarán los cavalleros en que gran bondad de armas ovieren cada uno según su valor assí passará adelante" (662). The hierarchy is thus established: those that get farther are better knights than those who had faltered earlier. However, to pass the final test and enter the secret room, a knight must surpass Apolidón himself, who was the creator of this trial, and the greatest knight of his time. Only once he achieves this feat, can he become the ruler of Insola Firme. Amadís fulfills this requirement and takes control of Insola Firme, thus acquiring his own lands, independently of his father or future father-in-law.

Heredity and Merit

Although Amadís is initially unaware of his true origins, the men in his family resemble each other not only in their appearance, but in their heroism, which seems to be a trait that can be passed down through generations[14]. Though all three of Perión's sons grow up away from their father, they each possess an uncanny ability and proclivity towards arms. As Cacho Blecua states, "Lo heredado y lo adquirido se condicionan mutualmente y se autoexplican, pues el caballero llegará a la cúspide de su estamento a través de las avanturas" (*Amadís: heroísmo mítico cortesano* 134).[15] As Amadís grows up unaware of his real parentage, there is a sense that it is not simply his royal blood that

[14] Similarly, just as virtue can be an inherited family trait, evil is also something that can be passed through blood. The text therefore states about Amadís's archenemy, "la maldad de Arcaláus alcançava a todos los de su linaje" (1074).

raises him to the high social status that he eventually achieves. The fact of his royalty predestines him to great deeds, as high nobility, even if a character is unaware of it, exhibits itself through inherent virtues. Nevertheless, as Henry Thomas notes, "it was essential that these heroes should be ignorant of their lofty parentage till they had proved their worth" (46). In Amadís's case, as in that of his brothers, the early break in family ties, which are reestablished later in the narrative, allows for a more individual development, and a sense of unaided accomplishment.

By the end of the narrative, Amadís, who starts off essentially nameless, has much surpassed Perión, who is introduced at the beginning of Book I as having "fama del mejor cavallero del mundo" (Rodríguez de Montalvo 229). By the end of Book IV, Amadís laughs good-naturedly at the suggestion that his father is the greatest knight in the world, since "la bondad de su padre en armas ni la hermosura de su madre no igualavan con gran parte a lo dél y de Oriana" (1704). It seems only natural, considering the hereditary nature of virtue and ability, that the only knight that may surpass Amadís would be his own son.

Marital Meritocracy

Amadís's merit-based ascent does not encourage social mobility between different estates but within them; a title did not necessarily come with economic prosperity, and Amadís's extraordinary rise, and especially his achievement of independence in his own domain of Insola Firme, would have been a wish-fulfillment fantasy for many young noblemen. As the knight moves through various spaces and adventures, he is allowed unlimited opportunities to prove his worth and thus earn

socioeconomic security. There are always more chances, as more adventure beckons: he might conquer lands, be given a generous gift as a show of gratitude for his service or marry up. These possibilities align well with the dream of the younger sons of lower nobility, who do not inherit, and who look to marry up, preferably to an heiress of higher status (Harney *Kinship and Marriage* 208). Amadís and Oriana's eventual marriage indicates that hypogamy – that is, marriages where a woman marries down, partnering with a male of lower social status – may be the best solution for these young men. The match appears to happen naturally, as opposed to the calculations of the actual marriage market, and the young lovers' choice turns out to be to everybody's advantage.

The romance's approach to marriage proposes choosing a spouse based not on his lineage, but on his personal qualities. While the hero actively seeks out adventures in order to further his honor and his good name, much of what he achieves is with his lady in mind, so that he may become a more desirable partner. Ultimately, the marriage to a woman of higher social status, who is also a love match, is a way of securing a comfortable future (though Amadís eventually finds himself unsatisfied with the unadventurous life). The text's romantic pairings show that lovers must be at the same level – both in the social hierarchy, and in the realm of beauty and virtue. For instance, the pairing of Madasima and Ardán Canileo is inappropriate, because "ella era fermosa y noble y él era feo y muy desemejado y esquivo" (866). While Amadís and Oriana match in their beauty and virtue, and are both royals, Oriana's father's position is superior to Amadís's. There is a certain inequality between them that must be remedied before they may publically marry.

Much of the text, therefore, deals with Amadís, the most handsome and the most virtuous of knights, rising in fame by defeating knights and monsters, until he becomes a more appropriate match for Oriana. Even as he reaches unmatched glory, he must win directly against his rival, the Emperor of Rome, to earn his lady's hand fully. Because Amadís earns his right to marry Oriana by always increasing his honor, the text proposes marriage to be largely a meritocracy. Lisuarte attempts to ensure a hypergamous marriage for his daughter, but she does not accept the match and finds it repulsive. Hypogamy, however, is presented as

> an escape from the tyranny of arranged marriages, which traditionally and by their very nature pay little heed to the inherent worth of the groom, concentrating instead on the political and honorific advantages of the match, in terms of the quality of affinal alliance ensuing between the lineages of bride and groom (Harney *Kinship and Marriage* 215)

The ladies that the knights wed are often of higher status, as is the case of Amadís's Oriana, or Galaor's Briolanja. These hypogamous marriages are achieved because the knights errant prove their worth through their personal traits and their great deeds. Although they include magical trials, supernatural threats, and travels through imagines landscapes, the adventures in the romance are essentially a fantastical reflection of the lives of young men who "would roam from tournament to tournament, displaying their prowess and risking their lives in the hope of winning fame and perhaps, if they outdid their rivals, a wife" (Duby *The Knight* 222). Thus, the romance posits that the male is not simply dependent on the female to ensure that her family would approve the match, but also can take matters in his own hands. Amadís also asserts his control by kidnapping his beloved instead of asking for her father's permission, which means that Oriana herself

does not need to find a way to convince or trick her father into accepting the match – a resolution that may have appealed to the female audience as much as the fantasy of an ideal match who submits to his lady's every whim.

Several adventures include references to Amadís refusing advances from other ladies. Even when such a refusal may physically endanger him or others, Amadís remains true to Oriana. A particularly developed instance of this is the episode in chapter XL, in which Briolanja insists that Amadís give her a child. It is narrated several times, each new account representing a possibility.[16] Of course, since Amadís easily passes multiple tests of fidelity (the ultimate test, which takes place on Insola Firme, in addition to the test of true lovers at king Lisuarte's court), the reader is to assume that he never did make love to Briolanja, in spite of the alternate versions of the story. The attention that the text gives to fidelity indicates that it is just as significant in terms of personal merit as prowess in arms, although not all knights completely agree with this criterion. For example, Galaor does not seem to consider amorous fidelity to be a mark of a good knight and his may have been the popular opinion, as male adultery was not traditionally condemned in the period, except by priesthood[17] (Duby *The Knight* 48). Still, Rodríguez de Montalvo's version of *Amadís* is closer to a Catholic ideal of chastity than most chivalric romances.

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[16] The concern with the truth value of this episode, just as in the case of Urganda's assurance that the son does not kill the father, in spite of what stories may circulate, is a way for Rodríguez de Montalvo to designate his own text as authoritative. These sorts of interventions are similar to the trope of the found manuscript, which Rodríguez de Montalvo uses in *Sergas de Esplandián*, and they allow for the text to resemble a history or a chronicle.

[17] Additionally, excessive love for one person could traditionally be seen as somewhat emasculating. As intercourse was supposed to cure lovesickness, it was recommended to have multiple partners, to avoid excessive fixation on one person (Bullough 38-39). Galaor's doubts about amorous fidelity may stem from this tradition, in which Oriana may be seen as a distraction, an impediment to Amadís's continuous showcase of chivalric masculinity, which would in this view consist largely of military prowess and sexual conquest of numerous ladies (as opposed to unrelenting devotion to only one woman).

Although the hero and heroine do engage in extramarital sexual activity, the text insists that they are married in the eyes of God even before the official ceremony and, crucially, they are each other's only sexual partners. The focus on fidelity perhaps reflects Rodríguez de Montalvo's concern with Catholic morality[18]. While he does not completely take away the scenes of romantic conquest, he leaves them to secondary characters such as Galaor.

Material Gains

The text reminds the reader repeatedly that the actions of the knights bring glory, and that they are talked about and admired even in faraway lands. In the fourth book, Elisabad, Amadís's physician, states:

> por todas las partes del mundo donde vuestra fama corre se sabe los grandes linajes y estados de donde vosotros venís, y que cada uno de vos en sus tierras podía bivir con muchos vicios y plazeres, teniendo muchos servidores con otros grandes aparejos que para recreación de la vida viciosa y folgada se suelen procurar y tener, allegando riquezas a riquezas. Pero vosotros, considerando aver tan grande diferencia en el seguir de las armas, o en los vicios y ganar los bienes temporales, como es entre el juizio de los hombres y las animalias brutas, avéis desechado aquello que muchos se pierden, queriendo passar grandes fortunas por dexar fama loada siguiendo este oficio militar de las armas, que desde el comienço del mundo fasta este nuestro tiempo ninguna buena ventura de las terrenales al vencimiento y gloria suya se pudo ni puede igualar; por donde fasta aquí, otros interesses ni señoríos avéis cobrado sino poner vuestras personas, llenas de muchas feridas, en grandes trabajos peligrosos fasta las llegar mill vezes al punto y estrecho de la muerte, esperando y deseando más la gloria y fama que otra alguna ganancia que dello venir pudiesse (1321-1322)

[18] As J.L. Nelson points out: "Ever since the Church, while approving marriage as a Christian state, had endorsed celibacy as the means and the sign of openness to the Holy Spirit, and then required this of its professionals, some lay Christians had been, on the one hand, attracted to this higher form of spiritual life, and, on the other, made anxious by the needs of the body, the attractions of sex, the social requirement of procreation." (122) Rodríguez de Montalvo's text thus paints the young lovers' relationship as a marriage, which was at least a site where sexual relations were necessary, if for no other reason, for procreation and continuation of the line.

Although the knights have given up a leisurely life full of pleasures that are available to members of their class, they seem not do so purely in order to help those in need. While they do take on the role of protectors, exposing their bodies to injury in defense of the weak, they largely do so in order to achieve glory. Glory is a form of social capital, illustrated in Keen's comment that "[o]ne literary function of Arthur's round table was clearly to be an emblem of the equal terms on which all knights, great and humble, mixed at his board once they had, by prowess or service, won their right to a place there" (30). The more successful and famous a knight, the more avenues are open to him, as he is welcomed and accepted in the higher echelons of society. In this sense,

> Literature accurately mirrors the aspirations of real-life knightly society, in which the young bachelors, unmarried cadets with nothing to offer but their swords, their good birth and an upbringing which had taught them a taste for adventure, were the most numerous element crowing round the courts of the greater nobility. For such men, whose real social position was insecure, the service of the great had powerful psychological attractions as well as economic ones, because it associated them with the standing and reputation of the men and the lineages that they served (Keen 29-30).

As the knights come to rub elbows with other powerful men, they receive, in return for their service, more tangible rewards.

Because glory is of such great value to a knight, there is a fear of being inactive for too long, as a period of inactivity may decrease others' perception of the knight's honor. When Amadís spends an extended period of time in Gaul without engaging in adventures, he finds

> en este medio tiempo, aquella su gran fama y alta proeza tan escurescida y tan abiltada de todos, que, bendiziendo a los otros cavalleros que las aventuras de las armas seguían, a él muchas maldiciones daban, diciendo aver dexado en el mejor tiempo de su edad aquello de que Dios tan cumplidamente sobre todos los otros ornado le avía, especialmente las dueñas y donzellas que a él con grandes tuertos

> y desaguisados venían para que remedio les pusiesse, y no lo fallando como solían, ivan con gran passion por los caminos publicando el menoscabo de su honra (1029).

Those who make accusations against his honor are, of course, in the wrong, since Amadís is obeying orders from his lady, therefore acting honorably in excusing himself from any conflict. Still, regardless of his reasons, even a thirteen-month period of inactivity does significant damage to his reputation, in spite of all previous glory. This period of idleness leaves Amadís aching for adventure and is a preview of his time in Insola Firme. Although once he becomes lord of his own lands, Amadís is free to remain in place without bringing damage to his fame, as his role changes from knight errant to ruler, he still cannot remain inactive, and leaves home at first opportunity.

While Elisabad does not specifically address material gains the knights achieve from their exploits, as a mention of "otra alguna ganancia" indicates, the knights' reputation may lead them to a richer court, or bring them a more desirable wife, various spoils won in battle, and even lands. Not only Amadís, but also the knights who follow him to Insola Firme and fight alongside him in the war against Rome and Lisuarte gain these sorts of benefits. Towards the end of the narrative, several chapters deal with the marriages that Amadís either arranges or approves, and with the fair distribution of lands that he has acquired. While there is little mention of the value of material gains that may be received from battle, the extensive discussion of the distribution at the end of the narrative indicates a certain attractiveness of wealth which seems to be at odds with the overall altruism of knighthood.

An explanation for this apparent paradox lies in the fact that generosity is expensive, as is maintaining a horse and weapons. A knight must display largesse, one of the primary virtues of chivalry, as Amadís does when he divvies up the lands among his men. This same contradiction is still present in modern superhero figures: Batman's alter ego, Bruce Wayne, has to be a billionaire, in order to maintain the batcave, the gadgets and weaponry, and his batmobile. His wealth does not take away from his altruism, and in fact, enhances it: in addition to fighting crime, he supports charities. Similarly, while a knight errant can certainly be both poor and honorable and must be able to live ascetically and endure hardship, to display fully all the virtues required of him, he does require a certain amount of financial capital. When chivalric romances promote asceticism, it may be a reflection of the reduced circumstances of real-life knights, who find themselves threatened by wealthy commoners, therefore making both largesse and indebtedness into virtues (Duby *The Three Orders* 324).

FRANCHISING UTOPIA

The chivalric romance, set in an ahistorical time, is an escapist, wish-fulfillment fantasy for its reader. This function adds to its contradictory nature: although the knight works toward a utopia, if he were to achieve it, the story would end, and it could no longer provide an escape from the real world. Like the modern superhero stories, *Amadís* has

> the proclivity toward the extension of story arcs enabled by the special nature of their lead characters. These parallels suggest that *Amadís de Gaula*, as the effective founding text of a literary 'franchise', is an opportunistic artifact of an early era in the history of industrialized entertainment. ("Amadis, Superhero" 313)

One of the more obvious changes that Rodríguez de Montalvo made to the original *Amadís* was to insert announcements of his addition to the cycle, *Sergas de Esplandián*, which focuses on Amadís's son as the new hero. For instance, he calls attention to a ring that will take on importance in *Sergas* (Rodríguez de Montalvo 1171), and also promises that we will find out more about Galaor's children and their adventures in the upcoming sequel (1588). These references to a future work function almost as a preview, or a sneak peek of the next installment at the end of a superhero blockbuster, dropping hints at future plot developments. As is so often the case in today's cinematic blockbuster franchises, the many continuations of Amadís

> are for the most part but poor exaggerations of their original. The giants become more gigantic, the monsters more monstrous as time goes on. This is inevitable when each new hero is the son of the preceding hero, and proves himself invincible by overcoming his already invincible father. (Thomas 67)

Regardless of the decline in quality, the later texts' connection to the original still attracted an audience, as is clear from the sheer amount of continuations and imitations.

Amadís is certainly concerned with the more philosophical question of what would happen if utopia were achieved, as is particularly clear in its treatment of its most utopic setting, Insola Firme. However, the presence of practical reasons for continuing a popular franchise cannot be denied. If the hero were finally to triumph over all evil and fully stabilize the space of the chivalric romance, creating a true utopia free of dystopic disruption, there would be no more stories to tell. Umberto Eco discusses this problem in his work on Superman:

> The plot must be static and evade any development because Superman *must*[19] make virtue consist of many little activities on a small scale, never achieving total awareness. Conversely, virtue must be characterized in the accomplishment of only partial acts so that the plot can remain static. (22)

No matter how many potential apocalypses he prevents, Superman cannot achieve anything on a large scale, because he would no longer be needed, and there could be no further episodes. The plot is "static" in the sense that there are no great developments, and the events seem to take place in a sort of timeless universe where nothing ever changes significantly. The contradiction between Superman's superpowers and his low impact is necessary to the series – without this inherent contradiction, it simply could not continue. Similarly, if at the end of Rodríguez de Montalvo's fourth volume all of the locations of Amadís's adventures became fully utopic like Insola Firme, there would be no reason for eight more books. For the knight errant to exist, there has to be darkness for him to fight.

This is not to say that the chivalric romance is not predominantly utopic, nor is there a sense that the darkness within it is overwhelming; it is, instead, a deviation from the utopic norm. The knight encounters each incident in a series, is able to resolve it and restore balance. Yet, he can never run out of conflicts because the full achievement of utopia would make him redundant – as happens to Amadís on Insola Firme. Therefore, the eternity of the hero's quest is a necessary and defining feature of the genre. There is no chivalric romance without a knight errant, and there is no knight errant without continuous itineration and adventure. The protagonists of chivalric romances find

[19] Emphasis not added.

themselves dreaming an impossible dream, its impossibility being essential for the prolongation of their story.

SPACE AND UTOPIA

Louis Marin refers to utopia as "space organized as a text and discourse constructed as a space" (10). In his discussion of *Utopia*, he remarks that Thomas More's text consists primarily of description, and the image it presents is that of a ubiquitous gaze, one that "*is not included anywhere but which views the whole as a surface*"[20] (117). Marin notes that Raphael's story is essentially a travel narrative, "whose events are places that appear in the narrator's discourse only because they are the various stops on an itinerary" (42). More provides a frame that seems to validate the discourse as a true travel narrative that records a trip taken in reality, when it is actually entirely fictional. *Utopia* includes ancillary material, including letters, the alphabet of the Utopians and a poem in their language, a map of the island, etc. This paratext is meant to increase the sense that Utopia is a real place, to which Raphael has traveled, and of which he has a first-hand knowledge.

Chivalric romance is also a form of fictional travel literature, as it follows the itineration of the titular hero and several other knights errant, and records their personal experiences, as the characters move from place to place. The different locales give the reader a (fictional) glimpse into different cultures and races, including imaginary creatures such as giants. While *Amadís* does not come with a wealth of supplementary materials like *Utopia*, it does blend fact with fiction. The geography of the chivalric

[20] Emphasis not added.

romance is “real unas veces, y ficticia otras, encontrándose lugares con valor simbólico como Constantinopla. Es común en muchas novelas de caballerías la mezcla entre la toponimia real y la inventada” (Gil-Albarellos 82). The ambiguous nature of the space of the romance recalls Marin’s statement that utopia is “the neutral moment of a difference, the space outside of place; it is a gap impossible either to inscribe on a geographic map or to assign to history” (57). Utopia is neither the Old nor the New World, not “the origin, the model, or the goal of the text” (57). Consequently, the space of the romance cannot be fully identified as real, or as fantastic, but remains something in between – it is at once both, and neither. It is, in other words, a space in between spaces, which is no place.

Just as Utopia is located in a “gap or difference that is active within historical and geographic reality: between England and America, the Old and New Worlds” (Marin 57), so is the world *Amadís* situated between the known world – places such as Great Britain - and the unknown one outside of reality. In temporal terms, it repeats this contradiction, exporting medieval dress, technology, customs, etc. to a different time, “No muchos años después de la pasión de nuestro Redemptor y Salvador Jesuchristo” (Rodríguez de Montalvo 227). It is set simultaneously in history and in myth, being neither one nor the other, yet somehow both at once – it is a term that is absent except for within the text.

As it intersperses real locations with fantastical ones, culminating with the utopic island of Insola Firme, *Amadís* may be considered, like *Utopia*, utopic travel literature. Both texts present the spaces through which their heroes travel – real or fantastical – as superior, well-ordered societies. Just as *Utopia* invites comparison with England, so *Amadís* implicitly contrasts the space of the romance with the space its readers inhabit.

As a travel narrative, the chivalric romance is, in Marin's words, "the remarkable transformation into discourse of the map" (42). Largely lacking the descriptive aspect of the typical travel narrative, the romance marks each locale with an incident. The knight traverses the spaces of the romance constructing the utopia not through an idealized description of different locations or peoples, but through narrative action. Even though the events and actions in the chivalric romance are repetitive – they tend to be challenges and battles, the details of which change only slightly - the various occurrences are the main way in which the various locales differ from each other. There is not much description that would distinguish between similar locations:

> Las indicaciones relativas al lugar se realizan en tanto en cuanto son necesarias para situar a los personajes en el cuadro de la acción. Nos encontraremos, en consecuencia, con lugares que no aparecen individualizados, sino que expresan estereotipos convencionales más o menos adecuados no sólo con el hombre sino con su actividad. (Cacho Blecua "Introducción" 157)

Instead of detailing the appearance of a forest, a stream, or a castle, each place that appears on the fictional map is not so much described, as it is marked by an event. So Amadís enters several groves and forests, but they remain mostly undifferentiated except for the action that occurs in them. In his first adventure as knight,

> entró por una floresta, donde el medio día passado, comió de lo que Gandalín le llevaba; y seyndo ya tarde oyó a su diestra parte unas bozes muy dolorosas, como de hombre que gran cuita sentía; y fue aína contra allá; y en el camino halló un caballero muerto (Rodríguez de Montalvo 279).

There is no marked difference between this and any of the other *florestas* he will later pass through, except for the events that unfolded there. The sum of these events is a map of a space recovered through adventure, containing both real locations, such as the city of London, and fantastic ones, such as Insola Firme and Insola del Diablo.

Errantry

In the chivalric romance, the knight's itineration is not linear, as there is no clear spatial quest, no particular goal to reach. There is neither an object to retrieve nor a home to return to – at least until Amadís acquires Insola Firme as his fiefdom - instead, the movement seems to be undirected and random, as the knight wanders from adventure to adventure, with only the plan of increasing his glory.

Each place of adventure appears in the text because in it, the chivalric ideals are temporarily threatened or inverted. The randomness of the knight's itineration means that there is no one locus that requires his attention, as temporary breaches are dispersed throughout the space of the romance. While the chivalric romance is predominantly utopic, and, as Harney notes, one can "describe readings by the audience(s) of the chivalric romance as vicarious itineration within the utopic space defined by the narratives" ("Economy and Utopia" 397), the local conflicts, where the ideals of the romance are temporarily inverted – damsels are not protected, the powerful prey on the weak, there is no concern with honor – are intrusions in the utopic space.

Throughout the narrative, Amadís functions largely as a stabilizing force in an idealized space in which ruptures occur. Evil in the chivalric romance primarily takes the form of breaking the chivalric code and abusing or dishonoring one's position. The moral failure of a knight temporarily disturbs the balance and order of a world built on chivalric virtue, displacing characters from their appropriate social role and threatening the entire socio-moral chivalric system. If those who fail to uphold their knightly vows were somehow rewarded for their behavior – if they were to, for example, take a lady against

her will and then live happily ever after – they would undermine the chivalric romance's sense of order and justice. While Amadís does encounter some monstrous creatures, his enemies are primarily other knights whose honor or sense of virtue has somehow been compromised. Fantastical creatures are, as Eco notes in the case of Superman, "added spice" (22). In *Amadís*, they are extreme versions of the same transgressions, only amplified: as monsters, they can engage in monstrously amoral behavior – they murder more knights, their relationships are incestuous, etc. In this sense, the monsters are simply more intensified versions of compromised knights, a fantastical articulation of the same threat.

The local dysfunctions within the idyllic space of the romance, which is otherwise populated primarily by honorable knights and their ladies, can be remedied by chivalric intervention: a monster or a bad knight might mistreat a lady, clearly in breach of the chivalric code, but the knight errant is there to restore balance. The hero's role is to resolve the malfunction and re-establish stability in the spaces that he traverses, that is, make it adhere to the chivalric standards. Allowing the knight to fulfill this function is one of the romance's most prominent utopic traits, and it is a role that is not exclusive to Amadís but is shared with his fellow knights. Repeatedly, the narrative diverges and follows a different characters' adventures - this happens particularly often with Galaor - only to encounter the same sort of scenario, with a different knight temporarily occupying the role of the hero, and a new opponent stepping in as the villain. This is the way in which the space of the romance overall allows for chivalric fantasy to play out, by allowing the knight to come across countless opportunities to do right, to correct

injustices, defeat evil, restore order. Each conflict leads to a temporary re-stabilization of the threatened place, that is, although the rules of chivalry were disobeyed, the space is once again organized in accordance with its ideals – the lady is again safe, the threat is removed, and everyone occupies his or her rightful place.

The knight always manages to correct the local malfunctions, and although his opponents often initially appear more powerful, the hero nonetheless defeats them. Still, with each correction, the hero finds himself no closer to completely ridding this space of threats. The fact that there are always more adventures to be had indicates that new ruptures keep occurring, and this seemingly utopic space leaves something to be desired.

In fact, there are two types of utopic space in the chivalric romance. There is the whole of the geography of the text, the map of which is difficult to draw as each individual location is barely described. It is not the particular features of the landscape that approximate it to a utopia, but its organization on the basis of an idealized feudalist system rooted in chivalry. The romance repeatedly demonstrates that any problem or conflict in this space can be resolved through a strict adherence to the chivalric code. However, the interruptions in this space are too numerous for it to be declared fully utopic in the same sense as Insola Firme, which may be considered a different type of utopic space, as in it all the ideals of chivalry become a reality, without any interruption.

Insola Firme

The geography of the novel of chivalry includes the known world as well as the edge of the map, the area populated by monsters. Islands, being isolated microcosms, are home to some of the most fantastical aspects of *Amadís*, such as monsters and magic. The

chivalric romance shares this feature with maps that are its contemporaries. As Simone Pinet points out, "[a]lmost all medieval mappaemundi represent these legendary, imaginary, mythical islands; all of them represented in their margins" (37). While a number of islands fitting this description appear in *Amadís*, the most important one in the present study is Insola Firme, which delivers a highly concentrated version of the chivalric romance's overall utopic vision.

Chivalric romance as a whole is set in

> un universo mítico como el tiempo en el que transcurre, ubicado en una geografía remota e inabarcable, impregnado de elementos sobrenaturales, encantadores, gigantes y enanos. El ambiente social que se describe pertenece a un sistema que ya no existe, a un ideal de clase donde se mezclan virtudes heroicas y aspiraciones cortesanas, conceptos alejados de las incipientes costumbres burguesas del 1500. (Petruccelli 85)

It represents a past that seems familiar, though it never was, and can never be. It is, in fact, reminiscent of Marin's description of a utopia as a space of "projection of existing reality into an 'elsewhere' that cannot be situated in historical time or in geographical space" (195) Insola Firme is a more condensed, more explicit expression of the same idea – on it, the chivalric system is the law of the land, undisturbed and absolute.

Naming a Utopia

Insola Firme becomes the physical location of a utopia in the text's fantastical geography. It is also referred to as Insola Dudada, since, as Urganda explains "con mucha razón Dudada se puede llamar, donde tantas cuevas y tan escondidas tiene" (Rodríguez de Montalvo 1626) Caves are equaled to the hidden and unexplored, just as the island itself cannot be fully explored until it is freed from enchantment. Moreover, the name

may refer to its very existence, in a naming game similar to the one Thomas More plays when he names his island "no-place," yet presents it as if it were real. The very existence of the Insola Dudada is doubtful, but doubt is not simple denial – it is possibility. As long as there is doubt, there is the slim prospect of discovery, the unlikely chance that the island may be found and explored in reality. It is a space that is neither entirely denied, nor confirmed.

The name that is primarily used – Firm Island – seems the very opposite of Insola Dudada. The contradiction reiterates the island's dual nature between place and no-place. "Firm" is a physical quality and therefore implies an actual, physical existence, as opposed to "doubted," which refers to mental activity and imagination. In contrast to the doubtful nature its alternative name indicates, Insola Firme implies that the island is decisively real, a stronghold, a safe haven, and also that it is unmovable. Thus, the text suggests that, although such a place may appear to be a dream, it can in fact be found, or founded: an explorer and colonizer's dream. The name also functions as foreshadowing; it is the place where Amadís's itineration will end.

Colonial Utopianism

Knights do not only travel through and explore different territories, but also conquer them. In *Amadís*, the conquest of Insola Firme may not take the form of a military conflict, but the effect is the same: the hero gains his own territory where he can establish a utopic community. In its presentation of Amadís's domain, the text is premonitory of colonialist mentalities.

The island is unconquerable by regular military means, because its most impressive places are protected by magic. These parts of the island are impassable for all but one – the most virtuous, the most loyal, and the most skillful of knights. Only once the magical places of this space have finally been completely traversed by Amadís and Oriana, the spell is lifted and Insola Firme reaches its full utopic potential and becomes a place that can finally be colonized. When Amadís settles there in his new family life, most activity stops, and the space lives up to its name – it becomes firm, stable, unmoving.

The romance presents Insola Firme as a latent utopia, the utopic potential of which can only be reached once the space is conquered by a deserving knight. Before being captured by Amadís, Insola Firme is fragmented, consisting of two different kinds of spaces, approachable and forbidden ones. It is a space to merely be passed through, receiving many visitors, none of whom can remain there. For the natives it is a space in suspension, as they are in a continuous state of expectation, waiting for a new lord to finally unify the island. A land populated by natives who readily accept that none of them could rule their own land and are eagerly awaiting a worthy outsider to be their king is a utopic vision for any conqueror. The population is clearly able and productive; as soon as Amadís overtakes it, they happily serve him and neither he nor his many guests want for anything. There is an immediate establishment of a hierarchy, and the natives are only too happy for their labor to be exploited by the colonizer.

This island, the very existence of which is initially doubted – Insola Dudada – proves to exist and becomes the neo-local residence[21] of Amadís and his beloved. The idea of finding an ideal hidden world and accruing their own wealth and their own domain would have appealed to the conquistadores, especially those without an inheritance or lands, as

> in the fantasy world of the romances, the preferred mode of self-affirmation and improvement is the outright acquisition of a domain of one's own. For real-world conquerors like Cortés, often the impoverished sons of hidalgo families, the New World was literally the chance to see a dream come true. (Harney *Race* 196)

Indeed, Spanish conquistadores made explicit references to *Amadís* when describing their encounters with the New World. Díaz del Castillo compares the first encounter with the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán as a vision from *Amadís*, and his references to the chivalric romance, as well as the use of chivalresque style, are "an effort to approximate the known to the unknown, the new world to familiar language and experience" (Gilman "Bernal Díaz" 107). Borrowing the language and images of *Amadís* equates the activity of conquest and colonization to the adventures of the knight errant, while also casting the conquistador as a hero of a real-life chivalric romance, seeking his own Insola Firme, a land that will be conquered because it is rightfully his. The New World thus becomes a space that had been waiting for him, in a sort of suspension, to become part of the known universe – much as the magical spaces of Insola Firme do once Amadís traverses them.

[21] "an independent household for the married couple." (Harney Kinship and Marriage 141)

Utopic Diversions

Before becoming Amadís's domain, Insola Firme is presented as a sort of tourist destination, which allows for role-playing and diversion. The island is akin to an amusement park, allowing the visitor to experience different thrilling adventures in a safe and controlled environment. It is first and foremost designed as a safe space, even before it finds its ruler in Amadís. That is, the dangers that the enchantments pose are not deadly, and have a game-like quality to them. The threats that are present, such as the giant snake fighting two lions or the deer being chased by dogs through the guests' bedroom (910-911), are there to thrill, not to cause harm. They happen at the same time every day, like a reoccurring show, and the native hosts take their visitors to experience these phenomena from designated locations: the battle is observed from a tower where the visitors enjoy dinner until the excitement begins, and they are specifically put to sleep in richly adorned rooms that would later be trampled by animals. These events cause excitement and wonder, and fear is followed by relief and laughter, so that the lady narrating the experiences concludes: "passado aquel miedo, tovimos muy gran risa de aquella rebuelta en que nos vimos" (912) If the chivalric romance as a whole, as Harney has suggested, "prefigures such modern entertainments as movies, television, video arcades, and amusement parks" ("Economy and Utopia" 393), this sort of function is replicated and condensed within the fiction in the Insola Firme. The most dangerous aspects of the island are the trials put in place to find the next ruler, however, even those do not cause permanent damage to the players. Those who fail are violently thrown out, but do not suffer any permanent consequences.

In this sense, Insola Firme is different from other spaces in the text, providing refuge and offering a sort of security that other spaces do not seem to offer. This function is only amplified once Amadís becomes the ruler, as the island becomes populated by the best of knights and the most beautiful of ladies, taking on an almost magical character. The Emperor of Constantinople, upon seeing the company assembled there, comments:

> yo creo verdaderamente que estas señoras no son nacidas como las otras mujeres, sino que aquel gran sabidor Apolidón por su gran arte las hizo y las dexó aquí en esta ínsola, donde las fallastes, y no puedo pensar sino que o ella o yo estemos encantados; que puedo decir, y es verdad, que si en todo el mundo tal compaña como ésta se buscasse, no sería possible poderse hallar. (1573)

Although Amadís lifted the spell, and the place is no longer enchanted, it continues to cause amazement. Even Urganda, herself an enchantress, is not indifferent to the effect of Insola Firme, and echoes the sentiments of the Emperor of Constantinople when she states:

> ¡O coraçón mío!, ¿qué puedes d'aquí adelantar ver que causa de gran soledad no te sea?, pues en un día has visto los mejores y más virtuosos cavalleros y más esforçados que en el mundo fueron, y las más honradas y hermosas reinas que nunca nascieron. Por cierto, puedo dezir que de lo uno y otro es aquí la perfeción; y ahún más digo, que assí como aquí es junta toda la gran alteza de las armas y la beldad del mundo, assí es mantenido amor con la mayor lealtad que lo nunca fue en ninguna sazón. (1615)

All the perfection of the world is found in this one place, maintained by virtue, love and loyalty. Furthermore, not only does Insola Firme attract the best of humanity, but it is also abundant in its material offerings. It is a self-sufficient space, "abundada de todas las cosas y de muchas caças y hermosas mugeres" (901) where Amadís has "muchas y preciadas joyas de gran valor" (901-902). The space is a refuge for the hero and his

beloved, as they are finally united there and free to love openly, isolated and protected from any conflict or evil in the rest of the world.

Utopia Found?

Insola Firme provides any and all provisions necessary, and is a sort of paradise on Earth:

> muchos passatiempos que en aquella ínsola tenían, especialmente los que eran aficionados a monte y a caça (…) todo era lleno de venados y puercos y conejos, y otras bestias salvajes, de las cuales muchas matavan (…) assí que se puede dezir que en aquel rinconillo tan pequeño era junta toda la flor de la cavallería del mundo y quien en mayor alteza la sostenía, y toda la beldad y hermosura que en él se podía hallar, y después los grandes vicios y deleites que vos avemos dicho, y otros infinitos que se no pueden contar, así naturales como artificiales hechos por encantamentos de aquel muy gran sabidor Apolidón que allí los dexó. (1588-1589)

The island is a space filled with delights, both man-made and natural, providing comfort and entertainment. With its rich natural resources, the space not only ensures a leisurely lifestyle filled with activities appropriate for the elite, such as hunting, but also seems to be able to exist as an entirely independent economy. This set-up, which features invisible yet obliging servants and economic self-sufficiency, continues that of the rest of the text, which ignores the reality of emergent capitalism[22] that began developing in Spain the 14th and 15th centuries (Valdeavellano *Curso* 289).

As Pinet notes, Insola Firme "is a placeholder for a political future, it is the adventure that is to take place but that is already known will happen, the event of

[22] Valdeavellano defines that this evolving economic system can be considered capitalist, "si por 'capitalismo' entendemos principalmente un Sistema de Economía de mercado fundamentado en la búsqueda de ganancias privadas que superan todas las posibles necesidades personales y en la utilización de los bienes acumulados o 'capital' para la obtención de nuevos lucros y para la creación de nuevos bienes."(*Curso* 289)

chivalric politics" (95). This function is explicitly addressed – the island awaits its rightful master, and in this place, the dream of a chivalry-based utopia can take root. As a placeholder for a particular political future, Insola Firme comes to resemble Utopia in Marin's analysis of Thomas More's text. The crucial difference is that, according to Marin, as it comes into being at "the natural breaking point between the feudal world and its transformation into the world of capitalism" (xvi), the text of *Utopia* describes a future social theory, before such a theory can be formed. In other words, Utopia is a sort of placeholder for Marxism, and is in this sense almost prescient.

Of course, More's socialism differs from the modern versions of it, as it is not based in the experience of later capitalism and its modes of production and exploitation. However, with the hindsight of history, Marin claims that Utopia's function as placeholder extends beyond the limits of the text, as Utopia unknowingly contains "three centuries of historical relations between England, Spain, Portugal, and America, between the Old and New Worlds: war and exploitation, which will end in the larger real and historical synthesis as nineteenth-century Western capitalism" (58). In contrast to Marin's view on the island of Utopia, Insola Firme's function as a placeholder is explicit within the fiction, but it takes no root in reality. In fact, it does not fully extend to the rest of the universe of the text (it cannot, since that would mean the end of the chivalric romance, taking away the need for a knight errant), nor, of course, the real world. It offers a utopic vision arising from the anxieties of a new system, but modeling its image on the chivalric ideal, far removed from the proto-socialist ideals of *Utopia*.

Utopia is organized around the idea of "communal welfare rather than the particular interests of the individual" thereby proposing "a radically different conception of prosperity" (Kenyon 80). In Thomas More's vision, equality is central[23], and so all the Utopians labor, just as they all receive an education and have the right to participate in government, and everybody is equal before the law. Most importantly, there is no private property and there is no monetary economy within the island (though it may be practiced with other countries). All the fruits of the Utopians' labor are equally distributed and any surplus is kept in store for all. The Utopians neither evade work, nor can they accumulate material benefits from others' (or their own) work. The obligation to work applies to everyone – there is no wealth or nobility; everyone has an equal responsibility and an equal right to leisure. In contrast to the egalitarian nature of this society, Insola Firme is utopic because its hierarchical arrangement is secure and well-maintained, a reflection of the ideal of the three orders, each in its rightful place.

As Amadís gains control of Insola Firme in part due to being a loyal husband, there is a clear connection between marriage and polity in the text. However, it should not be assumed that, if marriage is a meritocracy, the text must also argue for economic and social equality. After all, Amadís does not officially marry Oriana – although the text states that he is her husband before God from the moment they begin a physical relationship[24] - until he has achieved an appropriate social status. For most of the text,

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[23] However, Utopians also have slaves, and slavery is a punishment for a variety of crimes.

[24] The hermit who raises Esplandían explains to Lisuarte that Oriana could not have married the Roman Emperor because "vuestra hija es junta al matrimonio con el marido que Nuestro Señor Jesuchristo tuvo por bien, y es su servicio que sea casada." (1497) On clandestine marriage, which required the agreement of the two partners, but not necessarily the presence of a Church representative, see for example Ruth Mazo Karras's *Unmarriages: Women, Men and Sexual Unions in the Middle Ages*.

Amadís is a hypogamic match for Oriana, and works hard on bettering his status. While he is her social inferior, the relationship between Oriana and Amadís remains hidden. Although the revelation of the secret relationship seems to serendipitously come after Amadís has killed the Emperor and won the battle against the Romans and Lisuarte's army, this timing allows for the change in his status to take place before their marriage is made public.

While the text shows changes in status, these are not so great as to make a beggar into an Emperor. Amadís, while not being aware of it from the beginning, is still of royal blood, even if his family's status is not quite so high as that of Lisuarte. His rise to power is impressive, and "siéndole la fortuna más favorable que a ninguno de los nacidos, estando como un caballero andante pobre tiene hoy a su mandar toda la flor de los grandes y pequeños que en el mundo biven" (1569). However, this ascent to a high social position is still well within his class. The text does not in any way indicate social equality between various classes as a goal; in fact, it reinforces the idea of necessity of a strong social hierarchy. Urganda, presented as the wisest character in the text, whose supernatural powers include seeing into the future, stresses this fact when she says: "seyendo todos de una massa, de una naturaleza, obligados a los vicios y passiones, y al cabo iguales en la muerte, nos hizo tan diversos en los bienes deste mundo, a los unos señores, a los otros vasallos" (1754) The only equality between humans is in our mortal nature - we are all born, we are all sinful, and we all must die - while socially, some are here to rule and others to be ruled.

It does not surprise, therefore, that Insola Firme, the most explicitly utopic space, is not interested in equality, but instead maintains a clear hierarchical arrangement. The pleasures of the island are for the ruling elite, and only their perceptions of it are indicated, allowing the reader to identify him or herself fully with these characters. The text glosses over any labor necessary to maintain the leisurely lifestyle of the elite. At the same time, everybody is content in his or her social position, as is exemplified by the seating arrangements at a feast, "Cada vno según su estado lo mereçía, y todo era fecho mucho por orden" (1608). The only mentions of the native population indicate their satisfaction with having found a (foreign) ruler. When Amadís breaks the spell, everybody in the castle begins exclaiming happily: "Señor, havemos complido, a Dios loor, [lo] que tanto deseado teníamos" (673). Their perception is that the test is just, and that it is a wise way of choosing a righteous ruler. The natives happily deliver anything their new lord requires, and so they "avian a muy buena dicha de le servir con grandes provisiones de pan y carnes y vinos, y las otras cosas que darle podían" (Rodríguez de Montalvo 1320), while remaining largely in the background.

In the utopic environment of the chivalric romance, none of the real-world socioeconomic issues are present, and so the economic system in *Amadís* does not reflect that of the real world. Duby describes the connection between chivalry and the rise of monetary economy:

> They [the nobles] were increasingly threatened by the rise of the state and of money. Aware of their increasing vulnerability, the group of old families, whose sons, when they reached majority and had not entered the Church, had long called themselves knights, coalesced, taking shelter behind the chivalric system of values . . . Established by the relations of production – the boundary between the classes – was displaced imperceptibly toward the lower end of the social

> spectrum. Where this frontier had been, the nobility erected a new rampart. It was like the shadow or ghost of the original fortification, its imaginary form. And it was built by ideology, by ritual. (*The Three Orders* 276)

Although Duby focuses his research on France of the twelfth century, the economic changes and the accompanying anxiety he describes are also present elsewhere, and only increase in the next couple of centuries (Keen 244-245). Money does make a couple of appearances in *Amadís*, but not to a realistic extent, and economy is instead based on conquest and redistribution. As Harney shows,

> Wealth in the romances is gained through various modes of predatory appropriation, then used not to create additional wealth, but to reward, to motivate, to secure networks. The economy of the romances is, then, obstinately redistributive, in disregard of the contemporary monetary economy faintly reflected in the texts. ("Economy and Utopia" 388)

The chivalric romance thus provides both a wish-fulfillment function, in its plenty and leisurely existence, and a utopic alternative to socioeconomic reality.

There is no room in the romance for the growing group of non-nobles who benefit from the money economy and become wealthy primarily through trade (Duby 323). In *Amadís*, there is no mention of the "burgueses que . . . han accedido ya a la riqueza y se distinguen como grupo superior de la población ciuadadana" (Valdeavellano *Orígenes* 31) The knights never taint themselves with manual labor or trade and show little need for money. They also do not seem to engage in administrative forms of service, relying only on their traditional role as defenders, though in reality nobles took administrative offices, and moreover, had to compete for these posts with "men from nowhere, who were of humble birth . . . but efficient for all that" (Duby *The Chivalric Society* 184). Though they will populate the picaresque, no struggling or impoverished squires or

knights appear in the chivalric romance, and there is little trace of emerging bourgeoisie or new nobility, or any social tension between classes.

Duby shows how the French nobility "formed a united and homogeneous group, linked by a feeling of inborn and hereditary superiority and by a common respect for the ideals of chivalry, [but] as a class it also felt itself to be threatened" (*The Chivalric Society* 182). The chivalric romance answers this threat by imagining a strictly ordered society, in which overall satisfaction means nobody wishes to change their position. The texts exalt those characteristics and activities associated with nobility, an example of "clos[ing] its ranks and strengthen[ing] the bonds which held [the group] together" (182). In the utopic space of Insola Firme, everyone knows what their duties are, and the idealized idea of the three orders – those who fight, those who pray, and those who toil - is played out. Though the focus is only on the knights, it is clear the other two exist in the background, allowing for everything to function so smoothly precisely because they do not interfere. As Pinet observes,

> Happiness, in the end, is not premised – or not solely – on the supply of food and water, on the isle's good weather, or even on endless riches, but on the possibility of locking out the threat to these struggling lesser nobles to stand their ground in the crumbling system. Their happiness, their utopia, lies in the locking out of history" (87)

As every person is satisfied in his or her social position, the chivalric romance aligns with the medieval estates theory, which rationalizes great inequalities of wealth and privilege.

Juxtaposed to the paradisiacal space of Insola Firme, the picaresque showcases urban places, which crowd people of all classes together. In contrast to the chivalric utopia in which everybody is happy in their place, in the picaresque dystopia, everybody

is unhappy in their position. Hence, while the social mobility in the chivalric romance is only within one social class – a noble goes from being landless to being a king – in the picaresque, there is a general attempt at ascending above one's station. The pícaro constantly tries and fails to climb up the social ladder and is repeatedly (and often violently) reminded of his proper place at the bottom of the hierarchy. In this sense, the picaresque is also a reflection of the nobility's discomfort with social mobility, but instead of imagining a world in which mobility between social estates does not exist, the picaresque ultimately vilifies it.

SELF-FASHIONING

By the end of the narrative, Amadís has acquired lands, a wife of a high social standing, and political power. Socially, he has arrived: he has overshadowed not only Lisuarte, but even the new Roman Emperor himself, whom he selects among the Roman troops, for whom he chooses a wife, and whose lands he feels free to distribute among his own relations. The materialist wish-fulfillment aspect of this utopia is fully achieved, and the fruits of it are to be enjoyed *ad infinitum* on Insola Firme, which provides all the security and pleasure one may desire. However, once it becomes his own, this apparently utopic space disappoints the protagonist. Largely, the impediment to Amadís's happiness on Insola Firme seems to be the restrictive nature of his new social role. The knight's new domain turns out to be a limiting space, which significantly reduces his possibility of movement into new spaces and impedes his ability to self-fashion.

Stephen Greenblatt's work, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, considers self-fashioning as consisting of three parts: "a manifestation of

the concrete behavior of its particular author, as itself the expression of the codes by which behavior is shaped, and as a reflection upon those codes" (4). Greenblatt is apprehensive of separating the three aspects of his term, as he believes that this practice creates an artificial separation between literary criticism and sociology. His focus is thus on English Renaissance authors and the ways in which their lives and their work intersect to fashion identities, utilizing what he identifies as an anthropological approach (4). Nonetheless, while not denying the reciprocal relationship between art and reality, the present study is less concerned with Rodríguez de Montalvo's own self-fashioning in the context of his society, than with the way he allows for his characters to create new identities. The "simplest observation" with which Greenblatt begins his work, is that "in the sixteenth century there appears to be an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process" (2). Rodríguez de Montalvo's *Amadís* seems to share this view of identity as malleable and intentionally crafted, as the hero's ability to self-fashion is a crucial aspect of the text's utopic/dystopic interplay.

The Hero's Alter Egos

Throughout the narrative, the knight reinvents himself over and over again, taking on different names and personas. It is true that all the different personalities he invents retain the essence of Amadís – the greatest, most honorable knight, and the most devoted lover. However, he is allowed a freedom to construct his public persona at will and according to circumstance, amplifying one or another aspect of his personality. The change is as simple and as sudden as an invention of a new name, which not only the

characters within the text, but even the narrator, use in all the episodes that Amadís carries out with that particular persona. In the paragraph immediately recounting Amadís's reaction to receiving the name Beltenebros from the hermit with whom he lives, the narrator simply states "Beltenebros dio su cavallo a los marineros…" (710) and continues referring to the hero by that name until his true identity is revealed to others. In the intervening chapters, Amadís is still referred to by his true name by other characters, and when past events, which occurred before his identity change, are narrated. In this way, the text maintains the distinction between his two personas.

Amadís's multiple identities partially fulfill the same purpose as the modern superheroes' alter egos:

> In terms of narrative, Superman's double identity has a function since it permits the suspense characteristic of a detective story and great variation in the mode of narrating our hero's adventures, his ambiguities, his histrionics. But, from a mythopoetic point of view, the device is even subtle: in fact, Clark Kent personifies fairly typically the average reader who is harassed by complexes and despised by his fellow men (Eco 15)

Similarly, each of Amadís's identities allows for a different focus, exploring the different aspects of his character, as well as allowing readers with different personalities and priorities to recognize themselves in the hero. Although there is no Clark Kent version of Amadís – he is always extraordinary – some readers may relate more to his dedication to his beloved, while others may be more interested in the battles he wins. Each alter ego allows for a slight shift in focus, each showcasing different chivalric virtues.

The text is utopic in this sense, as each of the hero's multiple rebirths is another opportunity: they all repeat the chivalric fable and tell the story of a knight with no name or fame rising up on his own merit and fulfilling the potential of his noble blood by

excelling at different aspects of chivalry: faithfulness, prowess, courtesy, etc. Amadís is first known as Donzel del Mar, before being aware of his true name and heritage, and later becomes, at different times, Beltenebros, Cavallero de la Verde Espada or Cavallero del enano, and Cavallero Griego. Each of these identities fulfills a certain function. After receiving a letter from Oriana in which she rejects him, he takes on the name of Beltenebros and spends a period of time in solitude on Peña Pobre in a sort of love and grief induced madness, and later, being reconciled with his lady, gains recognition as the most steadfast lover through passing a magical test. As Cavallero de la Verde Espada or Cavallero del enano, he traverses much of the world, gains allies, and kills the monster Endriago. Under the name of Cavallero Griego, he arrives back to Britain in anonymity, and comes into conflict with the Romans and orchestrates the rescue of Oriana from her unwanted marriage to the Emperor. Each of these alter egos focuses on a slightly different aspect of Amadís: as Beltenebros, he is primarily a lover, as Cavallero de la Verde Espada, he is primarily a fighter, while as Cavallero Griego, he starts a war, shifting the text's focus from an individual knight to a larger conflict. Moreover, each of the personalities allows for a new beginning, giving Amadís the opportunity to build up his reputation again and again. In that vein, with his first alias, Beltenebros, "después gran tiempo que no menos que por el de Amadís fue loado, según las grandes cosas que hizo" (709). Once reaching such great glory, Amadís can uncover his true identity and add even more fame to his true name. This pattern is repeated with each new identity that the hero assumes.

A corresponding tendency to self-fashion is present in the picaresque, where the pícaro reinvents himself with each new master, or tries to present himself in different guises. This ability helps the pícaro climb the social ladder, although he is often unable to maintain a new persona for an extended period of time without being discovered. Unlike the knight, who willingly reveals his true identity and thereby becomes even more famous, the pícaro runs the risk of being punished for his transgression. This is because, while the knight always claims more fame and occupies a position worthy of his virtue and lineage, the pícaro's alter egos are not extensions of the self in the same way; he is usurping a position not meant for him.

As a knight errant, Amadís is able to put on and discard personalities as he sees fit, each name being connected with a certain space in which he performs his deeds, and a different aspect of his person. Each of these sequences concludes when Amadís uncovers his true identity. The end of each period allows for another one to begin, and yet, there is an inconclusiveness about this process. Although each of his names is associated with a different period and different virtues – for example, loyalty and steadfastness in love is central to Beltenebros, while prowess is most important in Cavallero de la Verde Espada – a change from one identity to the next does not actually bring about a major change in the character. Each persona may highlight different facets of the hero's character, but he ultimately remains a young knight, exploring different avenues of chivalry and his own personality. When he finally moves on to another stage in his life, as king, he does so in his own identity as Amadís, and as he reaches maturity, the experimental phase of his life comes to an end.

Limits of Utopia

In spite of the Edenic nature of his domain and the harmonious social and personal relationships within, Amadís soon

> començó acordarse de la vida pasada, cuánto a su honra y prez fasta allí avía seguido las cosas de las armas, y cómo estando mucho tiempo en aquella vida se podría escurecer y menoscabar su fama, de manera que era puesto en grandes congoxas no sabiendo qué fazer de sí. (1641)

Although inactivity can harm the honor and reputation of a knight, Amadís seems to simply be restless. As the narrator comments, "cuando aquí pensamos ser legados al cabo de nuestros desseos luego en punto somos atormentados de otros tamaños o por ventura mayores" (1641). While he may be concerned about his good name, Amadís also thirsts for adventure, and having achieved his initial goal, needs another one to occupy his time. He asks Oriana to let him go and is denied leave, so he occupies his time in hunting (1642) – a poor imitation of actual combat, a leisurely activity more fit for a courtier than a knight errant. Finally, he goes against his wife's command and, not daring to face her himself, sends a messenger to speak to her as he runs off towards adventure (1644).

The search for utopia ends up being closer to Amadís's version of happiness than the achievement of it. The contradiction of Insola Firme lies in the fact that it embodies the ideals of chivalry, but by its very perfection, makes the knight errant obsolete. Many of the text's dominant utopic elements stem primarily from the countless chances the hero gets to better, to redress, to achieve, but Insola Firme puts an end to this process, suddenly arresting the knight's movement and requiring nothing of him. Just as to defeat all evil would bring about the end of the world, so the acquirement of Insola Firme signifies the end for Amadís.

This knight's self-fashioning is connected to and achieved through a movement through space. New locations allow, and even call for, new disguises as the hero faces different sets of problems. Amadís loses this sort of freedom once he becomes anchored on Insola Firme. He is no longer able to fashion his own personality according to circumstance, instead, he is expected to adopt a prescribed personality that is appropriate to his new station. While his upward mobility leads to this point, Amadís seems not to find the achievement of the fantasy fulfilling. Once the text situates Amadís in a utopic space of abundance and harmony, it becomes evident that the dream he had chased is not actually a utopia for the hero. The life of freedom and conflict, and most importantly, of incessant movement and change, is more to his liking.

Amadís's insatiable desire for adventure appears to be in contrast to the wish-fulfillment elements of the romance. After all, once the knight errant receives lands and a lady's hand in marriage, he has achieved his goals. But the chivalric romance is aimed at the youth and prioritizes the themes important to this group of readers. Although its readership may have wanted the things that Amadís achieves, once the hero marries, has a child, and becomes the head of a family and a kingdom, he achieves maturity. The text cannot continue with a narrative about king Amadís and his life at court, because he would become a character of Lisuarte's type. Being a youth-oriented genre, the romance reflects the youth experience and desires: the *search* for adventure, love, and status, not so much the achievement of them. *Amadís* is not as interested in reflecting maturity, a period which its young readers perhaps could not, or were not too interested in imagining, as it is in telling stories about the process of reaching them.

In addition, the text exalts chivalry for chivalry's sake. That is, Amadís does not go into his adventures in order to get something out of them, or even hoping for a reward. He is appropriately rewarded, but he is not calculating, and he is not a mercenary. His primary motivation is not the idea of receiving something in return for his service, he simply acts in accordance with the ideals of knighthood; he does what he does and acts the way he acts because he is a knight. Knights errant exist to defend from threats, and while there is the possibility of reward, they are primarily motivated in their quest by the ideals of chivalry. Therefore, when Amadís, who has always defined himself through chivalry, finally achieves stability, he loses his own identity; he is no longer a knight errant because he cannot fulfill his function in a space in which there are no threats. He responds to this crisis by engaging in new adventures, thereby trying to prolong his youth.

The hero's yearning for other spaces, away from the terrestrial paradise of Insola Firme, points to a secret dystopia at the heart of the utopia, as it ends the knight's itineration, and stunts his growth. After a final act of self-fashioning, the knight is supposed to inhabit his new kingly role fully and ad infinitum. This sort of submission is so limiting that the knight errant finds it unbearable. Amadís's refusal to settle down is in defiance to the expectations of his setting, and contradictory to the static nature of this utopia, revealed in its very name – Firm Island. As he rebels against finality, Amadís begins to be perceived in opposition to his utopic setting. While the island is firm, Amadís is defined through movement; while the island guarantees safety, he always seeks danger; while the island needs a ruler, he remains a knight-errant. Although it is the

achievement of Amadís's utopic dream, Insola Firme is not the setting for a knight errant, and it cannot support the chivalric narrative.

CHAPTER CONCLUSION

The chivalric romance simultaneously contains both dominant utopic and recessive dystopic elements. On the one hand, the chivalric romance is set in a nonexistent time and space, an idealized past. In its utopic set-up, it imagines a society the main focus of which is the maintenance and preservation of its values and ideals, allowing for a strict hierarchical arrangement that leaves each estate satisfied. On the other hand, while the narrative consists primarily of episodes in which the hero's interventions correct any local malfunctions, such as dishonorable knights, these seemingly local breakdowns in the utopic fabric are ever-appearing. The knights' interventions are episodic: he deals with a threat and achieves a victory, but there is always another threat ahead of him. As soon as an action is taken, and perhaps after a brief amorous reprieve, the hero moves on to the next conflict. Thus, the sequence never comes to an end – it continues in following volumes, and other romances. Even after the protagonist retires to a new function, the role of the hero is passed on to another character, another generation, but the knight errant as such remains a necessity. The effect is similar to that achieved by Marvel's constant releases of superhero films, which all appear to be coexisting and who occasionally interact, creating a sense of a timeless, ever-occurring universe.

The malfunctions of the chivalric code are essential to the narrative, as the episodes in which the knight reinstates order and stability are the primary element of the

chivalric romance. Their never-ending nature, however, indicates that the space is not as utopic or as stable as it may initially appear; in fact, it gives the narrative a subtle dystopic pessimism. Wherever the knight errant goes on his random itineration, he encounters an interruption in the proper order of things, as the chivalric code seems to be repeatedly broken. The danger is greatest for the most vulnerable and powerless members of society – primarily women. While the knight's role is that of the protector, his very existence signals that there is something wrong with the space he inhabits – just as the need for a superhero such as Batman indicates the dreadful state of Gotham. The futility of his actions in this space is a recessive dystopic element, without which the narrative would not function.

The heroes of chivalric romances are in some ways engaging in what Popper calls a "piecemeal engineering" approach to building a utopia (158). The knights, much like the social engineer Popper imagines, "adopt the method of searching for, and fighting against, the greatest and most urgent evils of society, rather than searching for, and fighting for, its greatest ultimate good" (158). Amadís does not provide a plan for a better society, nor does he purposefully attempt to build one like Utopos[25] or Apolidón do. Instead, he deals with one threat at a time, without a clear plan except removing the immediate danger. With each victory, he should be coming a step closer to the achievement of a better world. However, the achievement of perfect stability – the vanquishing of all enemies and all evil – would mean the end of the chivalric romance, as

[25] Utopos is the founder of Utopia in Thomas More's work.

there would be no more need for a hero. The developments in Insola Firme illustrate this point – the knight errant becomes stationary and his function changes.

Additional dystopic aspects emerge with the treatment of Amadís's time on Insola Firme. Amadís's domain, by far the most extensively described locale in the text, is the utopic space the whole romance strives to become. Its sociopolitical arrangement is based on the chivalric ideals, and it is a rich stronghold with an independent economy. The conflict arises from Amadís's inability to self-fashion when he finds himself in the new role of ruler. The narrative deals with a character clashing not with a villain, but with the utopic environment itself. The hero's dissatisfaction and escape from this space signal a presence of dystopic elements. In spite of its advantages, Insola Firme is limiting to the extent that it does away with the very embodiment of the chivalric ideal, the knight errant himself.

Although Insola Firme is its most explicitly utopic space, the whole of the chivalric romance is highly idealized and predominantly utopic. It is concerned with space and itineration, yet, with the exception of Insola Firme, it contains few descriptions of places. Instead, it marks each place with an episode, a dystopic interruption, creating a map of spaces threatened and reclaimed. The disruptions and their removal are the backbone of the narrative – the majority of the story consists of conflicts between righteous knights and various threats to the system. The battles are not merely the conflict between two individual characters, but are, each time, a fight for the maintenance of the chivalric system. The dystopic disruptions thus simultaneously allow for a reconfirmation

of the utopic nature of the chivalric romance with the hero's sure victories and call it into question with their constant reappearance.

Chapter Two: The Spanish Picaresque as a Carnivalesque Dystopia

Bakhtin writes that medieval carnival "marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions" (*Rabelais and His World* 10). With its democratic spirit and rejection or inversion of social hierarchies, carnival was in its essence anti-feudal. It temporarily erased inequality and the boundaries of age, caste, or wealth, allowing for interactions between people normally separated by their social backgrounds. Everyday life was inverted in carnival, as its logic was "the peculiar logic of the 'inside out' (*à l'enverns*), of the 'turnabout,' of a continual shifting from top to bottom, from front to rear, of numerous parodies and travesties, humiliations, profanations, comic crownings and uncrownings" (11). The reversal of hierarchies and erasure of usual boundaries was accompanied by laughter, at once celebratory and mocking, and directed at everyone.

Carnival's humor "opposed the official and serious tone of medieval ecclesiastical and feudal culture" (4). Carnival allowed a release "for the second nature of man, for laughter" (75). For Bakhtin, carnival laughter is festive laughter, that is, it is not restricted to an individual event or person, but is universal, directed at everyone, including those laughing. Images and gestures that caused laughter were often debased versions of sacred and civil rituals and symbols which were "transfer[ed] to the material bodily level" (74). Church ceremonies were imitated in "gluttony and drunken orgies on the altar table, indecent gestures, disrobing" (74-75). As laughter "degrades and materializes" (20), everything high is brought down, the spiritual replaced with the material. These acts and

images are not pure negation, but are ambivalent, for as Bakhtin says, the laughter is "gay, triumphant, and at the same time mocking, deriding. It asserts and denies, it buries and revives" (11-12). Bakhtin refers to these ambivalent images as "grotesque realism," and affirms: "The essential principle of grotesque realism is degradation, that is, the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity" (19-20). While they feature extraordinary, grotesque bodies and are often violent, such images, focusing in particular on the lower part of the body and its functions (such as copulation, urination, defecation, pregnancy and birth), also promise renewal and rebirth (21). Therefore, the grotesque imagery, which may feature elements of violence or death, also means a prolongation of life through nourishment, or the conception of new life.

While carnival itself is a social phenomenon, the term "carnivalesque" denotes the upside-down atmosphere reflective of that of the medieval carnival. It is pseudo-carnival: it differs from carnival proper, and is applicable to different contexts and phenomena that, while not carnival, imitate carnival, borrow from it, or exhibit aspects of it. Literature that relates to carnival in any of these ways would be considered carnivalesque, while remaining separate from the actual phenomenon of carnival, which is of the moment, and cannot be restricted to the written word. Bakhtin lists the most common forms of carnivalesque literature:

> prevailing forms are the secular parody and travesty, which present the droll aspect of the feudal system and of feudal heroics. The medieval epic parodies are animal, jesting, roguish, foolish; they deal with heroic deeds, epic heroes (the comic Roland), and knightly tales ("The Mule without a Bridle," "Aucassin and Nicolette"). There are various genres of mock rhetoric: carnivalesque debates, comic dialogues, and *euloges*. Carnivalesque humor is also reflected in the *fabliaux*

and in the peculiar comic lyrics of vagrant scholars. (15)

While Bakhtin does not specifically discuss the picaresque, it is in many ways a carnivalesque mode. It is a carnivalesque parody of the predominantly utopic chivalric romances, which, as Peter Dunn states, "probes the relation of self, role and society in totally new ways by finding new ironic or parodic or tragicomic forms of the quest narrative" (15).

At their core, Early Modern Hispanic picaresque fictions are dystopic refutations of the *libros de caballerías*, with an atmosphere reminiscent of carnival. As a carnivalesque mode, the picaresque makes ample use of grotesque imagery and of humor, laughing at everyone indiscriminately. It makes frequent use of abusive and insulting language, emphasizing functions of the lower body, its reproductive and digestive organs. It is also predominantly dystopic, as it presents a society in which abuse and dysfunction are systematic. Every institution, social class and interpersonal relationship is affected by violence, exploitation and injustice. Nobody is satisfied in their place, but the social structure limits significant social ascent, only allowing for improving one's conditions through nefarious means: lying, bribes, crime, etc.

Part of the picaresque parody of the romance is that the pícaros achieve a certain upward mobility by acting in ways that are the antithesis of chivalry. Not only are they of low birth, but whereas the chivalric romance's meritocracy was based in chivalric virtues, when the pícaros achieve any sort of advancement, they do it by being egotistical, conniving, discourteous, disloyal, materialistic, and miserly. The picaresque mocks the

idealism of the chivalric romance, revealing that, if the pícaros are rewarded for bad behavior, it is because their whole society is dysfunctional, and values vice over virtue.

Yet, just as the chivalric romance's predominantly utopic space is interspersed with recessive dystopic elements, so the picaresque dystopia contains certain utopic elements. The pícaro takes advantage of unexpected opportunities by fashioning himself into whatever persona the situation requires. In this way, he represents an idea of a world in which hierarchies are loosened, and anybody can occupy any position, in contrast to the hierarchical utopia of the chivalric romance. In examining the picaresque's relationship to the chivalric romance and its treatment of utopic and dystopic themes, this chapter primarily focuses on the earliest Spanish picaresque work, the anonymous *Lazarillo de Tormes*, which responds most directly to the tropes established by the Spanish chivalric romance such as Rodríguez de Montalvo's *Amadís de Gaula*. *Lazarillo* is a first-person narrative describing the titular protagonist's experiences as he goes from master to master, providing a wide-ranging portrayal of Spanish society. In addition, Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache*, and Francisco de Quevedo's *El buscón* are referenced as later examples of the Early Modern Spanish picaresque.

THE PICARESQUE AS A CARNIVALESQUE MODE

Although he does not offer a detailed analysis of the picaresque as a carnivalesque mode, Bakhtin acknowledges that the early picaresque novel "was directly carnivalized" (*Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* 131), that is, was influenced by carnival itself, not merely representations of it. The early picaresque was also a source of carnivalization for 17th, 18th and 19th century literature, the authors of which had no direct contact with

actual carnival (131). And yet, the picaresque is in some ways contradictory to carnival as Bakhtin describes it. It is concerned with class and social ascent, as the pícaro's social ambition is to distinguish himself from the masses. Because the pícaro has ambitions beyond his socioeconomic position, there is a paradoxical nature to the picaresque. Whereas carnival is democratic, the pícaros' (often ultimately failed) attempts at social ascent draw attention to the inequality between classes. While there is a strong element of social criticism in the picaresque, in Bakhtin's view, true carnival does not concern itself with morality or social criticism.

Bakhtin states of satire:

> The satirist whose laughter is negative places himself above the object of his mockery, he is opposed to it. The wholeness of the world's comic aspect is destroyed, and that which appears comic becomes a private reaction. The people's ambivalent laughter, on the other hand, expresses the point of view of the whole world; he who is laughing also belongs to it. (*Rabelais and His World* 12)

Overall, Bakhtin claims that satire is incompatible with carnival because it creates divisions between those who are mocked and those who are laughing, while in carnival, nobody is above the fray. However, although inspired by carnival, the carnivalesque is not equal to it. Therefore, carnival forms, themes and symbols can still influence satirical texts. Bakhtin acknowledges as much when he states that Voltaire "uses carnival forms for satire" (119). Moreover, the social criticism present in the picaresque is directed at everyone, and is in this sense democratic. Nobody escapes scrutiny in the picaresque, all the characters and institutions are corrupt, and the narrator – normally the pícaro himself – does not speak from a moral high ground, as he is implicated in all the vices and immoralities of which he accuses others. The picaresque relies on laughter, which like in

carnival, is directed at everyone, and even the most grotesque and violent incidents are often narrated for comic effect. Nobody avoids the mocking of the picaresque, which creates a democratizing effect between the upper and lower echelons of society.

When Bakhtin discusses the concept of grotesque realism, he describes its productive nature: "Degradation here means coming down to earth, the contact with earth as an element that swallows up and gives birth at the same time. To degrade is to bury, to sow, and to kill simultaneously, in order to bring forth something more and better" (*Rabelais and His World* 21) The picaresque makes ample use of grotesque imagery, paired with a general downward movement and a concern for the low stratum. The focus on the body, and particularly images of bellies and buttocks, with episodes focusing on bodily processes such as feeding, digesting, defecating, vomiting, is accompanied with a focus on the lower stratum of society. Following the idea of body politic, the analogy of community as a human body, this concern with the lower parts of the body echoes the focus on the lower classes. While the chivalric romance dealt with the upper parts of the body – kings and knights, that is, the head and hands – the picaresque deals with the lower parts. The metaphorical lower stratum of street urchins, beggars and thieves thus corresponds to Bakhtin's literal lower spectrum of the body, the earth, etc. This dragging downwards is a means of allowing new utopic ideas to germinate within the carnivalesque inversion of the chivalric romance. As Bakhtin explains:

> Degradation digs a bodily grave for a new birth; it has not only a destructive, negative aspect, but also a generating one. To degrade an object does not imply merely hurling it into the void of nonexistence, into absolute destruction, but to hurl it down to the reproductive lower stratum, the zone in which conception and a new birth take place. Grotesque realism knows no other lower level; it is the fruitful earth and the womb. It is always conceiving. (*Rabelais and His World* 21)

Through their grotesque inversion as a picaresque dystopia, the main utopic ideas of the chivalric romance are degraded, but new utopias take their place.

The picaresque is paradoxical because it is at once dystopic, representing a society of irredeemably corrupt institutions and individuals, in which the dysfunction reaches everything and everyone and is therefore systematic; and utopic, as it is imbued with carnivalesque spirit. Bakhtin states that at the time of carnival, people "entered the utopian realm of community, freedom, equality, and abundance" (*Rabelais and His World* 9). Carnival temporarily removed the strict hierarchies normally in place, however only for a short time. It was in part the "brevity of this freedom [that] increased its fantastic nature and utopian radicalism" (89) The picaresque is a literary representation of this relationship between the utopic dream of freedom and hierarchical reality. It is largely dystopic, but the pícaro's repeated and mostly failed attempts to rise in spite of all the roadblocks in his path reflect a belief in the possibility of a utopic sense of freedom and equality. Just as the knight errant encounters a multitude of interruptions in the predominantly utopic landscape of the chivalric romance, which allow him to reassert the chivalric ethos, so the pícaro encounters numerous opportunities for change, which are utopic interruptions in the dystopic environment. He can take advantage of these opportunities by donning various masks, presenting himself as different people, recalling the spirit of carnival. However, the pícaros' victories are either incomplete (as in the case of Lazarillo) or they do not last (as in the case of Pablos), reminding the reader of the fantastic nature of the characters' social ascents, and the overall dystopic nature of the picaresque.

Bakhtin claims that

> documents of that [Renaissance] period prove a clear and carefully defined awareness of a great turning point, of a radical change of historical epochs . . . The men of that time bade farewell to the 'darkness of the Gothic age' and welcomed the rising sun of the new epoch. (*Rabelais and His World* 98)

The forms which could express this awareness came from the medieval culture of humor, and were

> precisely related to time, to the future. They uncrowned and renewed the established power and official truth. They celebrated the return of happier times, abundance, and justice for all the people. Thus had the new awareness been initiated and had found its most radical expression in laughter. (99)

The carnivalesque images utilized in Renaissance literature "became the expression of the general gay funeral of a dying era, of the old power and old truth" (99). The picaresque participates in marking this change, this "destruction of the old and the birth of the new world" (410). It utilizes the carnivalesque register to address sociopolitical change, putting indiscriminate criticism in the mouth of the pícaro, essentially a non-entity in the tradition of the fool or the clown. In the time of the Spanish Inquisition, this tactic afforded some level of security. As Bakhtin notes, "No doubt laughter was in part an external defensive form of truth. It was legalized, it enjoyed privileges, it liberated, to a certain extent, from censorship, oppression, and from the stake. This element should not be underestimated" (94). The picaresque abuses the beggars and the nobles equally, its non-serious tone providing perhaps some measure of protection for its author and reader[26]. As Bakhtin adds, this protection is not only "from external censorship but first of all from the great interior censor; it liberates from the fear that developed in man

[26] *Lazarillo* was placed on the Index of Prohibited Books in 1559.

during thousands of years: fear of the sacred, of prohibitions, of the past, of power" (94). With the cover of laughter, the "antifeudal, popular truth" (94) can be expressed, finding its form in carnivalesque imagery.

Whereas the chivalric romance idolizes the lifestyle of the elites and paints the nobility as honorable heroes, the picaresque focuses on the lowest members of society. It turns the chivalric romance upside-down, and while the world that Amadís inhabits is ordered on chivalric principles and promotes a clear and firm social hierarchy, the picaresque breaks down hierarchies and mocks chivalric ideals. The protagonist of the picaresque is a type of character that is unmentionable in the chivalric romance. In the romance, he would be one of the invisible masses, but in the picaresque, he occupies the place of the hero. This reversal is the literary equivalent of "travesty, that is, the renewal of clothes and of the social image" (Bakhtin *Rabelais and His World* 81). Travesty was an essential element of folk festivals, along with "a reversal of the hierarchic levels: the jester was proclaimed king, a clownish abbot, bishop, or archbishop was elected at the 'feast of fools' and in the churches directly under the pope's jurisdiction a mock pontiff was even chosen" (81). The pícaro taking the place of the knight, that is, the antihero taking the place of the hero, is parallel to the carnivalesque crowning of the fool as the king. The pícaro may essentially be seen as a dressed down knight, and by extension, the knight becomes a dressed-up pícaro.

Bakhtin notes that

> downward movement is also inherent in all forms of popular-festive merriment and grotesque realism. Down, inside out, vice versa, upside down, such is the direction of all these movements. All of them thrust down, turn over, push headfast, transfer top to bottom, and bottom to top, both in the literal sense of

> space, and in the metaphorical meaning of the image. (*Rabelais and His World* 370)

The picaresque presents a topsy-turvy world that pulls chivalric tropes downward and turns them on their head. The pícaro is akin to the medieval clown, who would readily move "every high ceremonial gesture or ritual to the material sphere; such is the clown's role during tournaments, the knight's initiation, and so forth" (20). The knight's virtues are both imitated and inverted by the pícaro who, generally born an outsider, tries to advance and integrate into society. The primary chivalric virtues of prowess, loyalty, largesse, courtesy, and sincerity (Keen 2) are mocked or inverted. There are no honorable battles between knights, but plenty of brawls in the picaresque. As children, the pícaros tend to be beaten, and they gladly repay the abuse whenever they get the chance. Lazarillo famously leads his blind master to smash his head and leaves him for dead, as payback for a similar trick the old man played on him at the beginning of their time together. There is no loyalty in the pícaro's world, neither in business, nor in friendship or amorous relationships. Women often serve as a ladder to a better social position (as, for instance, in the case of Pablos's attempt to marry a noblewoman), and their sexual favors are extended outside of marriage, often for financial gain. An example of this is the affair that Lazarillo's wife is having with her employer, the archpriest, which secures a relatively comfortable existence for the pícaro. Largesse is replaced with miserliness and greed, as masters starve the child Lazarillo and innkeepers serve expired food to unsuspecting diners, as in *Guzmán*, where the pícaro's food poisoning is so bad that he says years later: "aun el día de hoy me parece que siento los pobrecitos pollos piándome acá dentro" (Alemán *Guzmán de Alfarache I* 173). Those who have wealth are not eager

to part with it, and the pícaros spend much of their time coming up with illegal or at least immoral ways to convince them to share. The pícaros are conmen and liars, but so are the people they meet, regardless of their social position, and there is no room for sincerity in the picaresque. As for courtesy, the courteous behavior and language are replaced with calculated scheming, violence, and curses.

As the vagrant beggar takes over the role of protagonist, he makes explicit the knight's stealthy social climbing. Although it may not be his explicit intention, Amadís is rewarded for his good works with a beneficial marriage (not only does he love his wife, but he is set to inherit Great Britain from her father), he is famous and respected, and he is the ruler of his own domain. In contrast to the knight, whose social ascent seems to be an appropriate, if accidental, reward for his deeds, the pícaro's lust for social and material advancement is explicit. His quest is a funhouse mirror of Amadís's. The knight's felicitous marriage is mirrored by the conquests – or attempts at conquest - of women of higher social status in the picaresque. Though the types of battles the two engage in differ greatly, both types of wandering protagonist come into conflict with adversaries; Amadís relying on his arms, the pícaro counting on his wits. The protagonist of a novel of chivalry is destined to be great from the moment of his high birth, but ultimately reaches his fame and his rightful place through his ceaseless attempts to rid his world of threats. The pícaro's virtues and flaws are often reflective of both his low birth and his social circumstance, but instead of expelling the conmen and abusers of power from his society, he learns from them.

In the picaresque, figures such homeless beggars, conmen and thieves mingle with noblemen, and reveal that birth has little bearing on a man's character: everyone is equally corrupt and self-centered, driven not by honor, but by greed and carnal instincts. Although it is interested in social mobility, the picaresque paradoxically still has a carnivalesque democratic spirit, as all men are equal – prone to vice and motivated by money, power, and sex. The boundaries between the estates are in place, but do not always hold, as the pícaro is able to move among different people and occupy different positions. Often, the nobles in the texts only have their titles, but are worse off than the pícaros they encounter, both morally and financially. The figure of the impoverished squire is a common one in the picaresque, and is a startling contrast to the squires and knights of the chivalric romance. Lazarillo's squire, who relies on his servant to feed him, and repays Lazarillo's kindness by abandoning him at first sign of trouble, in particular is a parody of the knights of *Amadís*, who dedicated themselves to the service of others and the maintenance of the chivalric ideals.

Knights errant let honor be their guide in all things, and their altruism ultimately bring them wealth and fame. Amadís acts honorably regardless of the effect on his reputation, and obeys his lady even when it harms his good name. Lazarillo's squire, on the other hand, understands honor only in terms of how he is perceived by others. His obsession with honor is actually an obsession with reputation, and instead of leading him to great deeds, it leads him to absolute economic ruin and idleness. Because a title comes with certain benefits, such as tax exemption, the squire is desperate to retain it, and careful not to mar his hands with labor which would deny him such privilege. Similar

figures of impoverished squires appear frequently in the picaresque (the one appearing in *El Buscón* is so poor, he cannot afford to wear anything under his cape), to represent the impossibility of the life of leisure that *Amadís* imagines in Insola Firme, even for those who are born noble. Even the poor, homeless Lazarillo feels sympathy for the squire, who has fallen so low that his boy servant has to acquire food for him, creating a carnivalesque inversion of usual roles. Whereas the noble heroes of chivalric romances woo beautiful ladies, the squire's lowliness is further emphasized when he attempts a seduction of prostitutes, "diciéndoles más dulzuras que Ovidio oscribió" (85). The women, however, see through him, and "como sintieron dél que estaba bien enternecido, no se les hizo de vergüenza pedirle de almorzar, con el acostumbrado pago" (85-86). As he is unable to pay, the women deny him and leave, making it clear that the squire is unable even to consort with prostitutes.

PICARESQUE AS A CARNIVALESQUE DYSTOPIA

The chivalric romance is primarily utopic, as it imagines a society built on chivalric ideals, in which everyone is satisfied in his or her place. Although the knight encounters numerous threats, each conflict is an opportunity to reassert the superiority of chivalry. In some ways, the picaresque is surprisingly similar on this point – the pícaro is repeatedly abused and his attempts at social ascent are mostly thwarted, but he always has another opportunity to try. Just as the threats to the chivalric system are a necessary feature of the chivalric romance, so the opportunities that open up for the pícaro are necessary for the picaresque. However, as the picaresque is a carnivalesque inversion of the predominantly utopic chivalric romance, although the pícaro repeatedly reinvents

himself and cons his way into second chances, his fortune never changes profoundly. He is always beaten down, and the largely dystopic atmosphere of the picaresque is reaffirmed.

The carnivalesque reversal, though filled with laughter, results in a predominantly dystopic, dysfunctional world. In this sense, the carnivalesque nature of the picaresque, while utopic in the sense that it releases the pícaro from some of the rigidity of the hierarchal structure of his society, also reasserts the dystopia, as everybody participates equally in the social dysfunction. The dystopianism of the picaresque is particularly apparent in the texts' depiction of a primarily urban space infused with a panopticonism which reflects the reality of the Inquisition in the time of the texts' publication and the ever-present corruption, violence and dysfunction stemming from a ubiquitous materialistic ideology.

Space in the Picaresque

As opposed to the vaguely defined locations of the chivalric romance, the emphasis on the bodily existence of the picaresque protagonist is matched with an attention to places where he may eat and sleep. These places are described in a more detailed and realistic fashion, and whereas the time-space of the chivalric romance was somewhere between history and myth, the picaresque grounds itself in the present and in real geography, its map consisting mostly of cities and taverns on the roads between them. Just as in the chivalric romance, errantry is a crucial element, but the urban squalor of the picaresque contrasts with the open spaces and castles typical of the romance. Places of abundance, that were readily available to the knight, are outside of the pícaro's

reach, and any palaces that may appear in the text are glimpsed from the outside, imagined in interpolated stories, or the pícaro enters them as a servant or a thief. Some picaresque texts present a particular spatial quest – Guzmán, for instance, goes to Italy in search of his family – yet these goals change throughout the narrative, and, just as it was in the chivalric romance, social ascent remains the true quest.

Errantry is a crucial aspect of the chivalric utopia, as the knight's seemingly aimless wanderings allow him to repeatedly confirm the superiority of chivalric ideology. Each random encounter leads to a conflict, which the knight wins by adhering to chivalric ideals. In the picaresque, errantry achieves a similar effect as the pícaro moves through the landscape, engaging with a variety of characters. However, while the knight typically fights for another, demonstrating his altruism, the pícaro and everyone he encounters are focused on the self, with little to no regard for others. Although the pícaro's encounters are not armed conflicts, one (or both) characters try to outmaneuver each other through manipulation, lies, or trickery. As the only ideals picaresque encounters demonstrate are materialism and egotism, they confirm the overall dystopic nature of the texts. However, the pícaro's insistence, as he always makes yet another attempt to improve his lot, shows that he is driven by an optimism incongruent with his environment.

Robert Folger characterizes the urban space of the picaresque as "oscillating between utopian pleasure and excess, and dystopian violence and frustration" ("Spatial Disturbances" 53). He utilizes Foucault's concept of heterotopia[27] to show that the

[27] Foucault defines heterotopias as "real places—places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society— which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented,

picaresque records a fundamentally different experience of the urban space between the subaltern and the high classes. The heterotopic spaces of schools, prisons, galleys, etc., are mainstays of the picaresque tradition, and Folger sees them as intensified versions of the punitive urban space, designed to keep the low classes in their place, often through the use of violence. While this view casts the pícaro primarily in the role of victim, largely disregarding the carnivalesque nature of the violence in these texts, as well as the pícaro's participation in violent action, it rings true that in *El Buscón*, "the prison is merely a perfected image of an order not fully implemented in 'real space'" (Folger "Spatial Disturbances" 62). However, when Folger discusses heterotopias in the picaresque, he moves swiftly between physical places and spaces that exist outside the strictly physical realm, indicating that the pícaro also creates "temporary and very localized heterotopias" ("Spatial Disturbances" 64). Unlike the prisons, schools and galleys, the spaces the pícaro creates have more in common with utopia than heterotopia.

Folger states:

> The *Buscón* shows that the pícaro is subject to violence and suffering, and threatened to the point of death. For him, however, the heterotopia he inhabits has more of a 'space of compensation,' a space of opportunity to escape social deprivation, material destitution, social control, and the shackles of genealogy. ("Spatial Disturbances" 64)

As Folger moves from discussing heterotopias such as penitentiaries – which are examples Foucault also provides when describing his term – to those the pícaro creates himself, he seems to also move from spaces that are real and accessible within the fiction of the picaresque, to the mental and ideological spaces the pícaro inhabits. Though the

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contested, and inverted." ("Of Other Spaces" 24)

term heterotopia is appropriate here in the sense that the spaces the pícaro creates are sites that "reflect and distort social relations" and serve as "a reflection or a counter-image of the whole of society" (Folger "Spatial Disturbances" 55), they are not always "real places" (Foucault "Of Other Spaces" 24). Foucault states that the crucial distinction between a utopia and a heterotopia is its virtuality or reality, as heterotopias are places which are "real places – places that do exist . . . a kind of effectively enacted utopia" (Foucault "Of Other Spaces" 24). In contrast, he defines utopias as

> sites with no real place. They are sites that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of Society. They present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down, but in any case, these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces. (24)

While all picaresque spaces are ultimately fictional, the spatial reality within the text is not equal in all cases: a prison is an actual locale in the text, whereas the space of the pícaro's desires is "fundamentally unreal" (24). That is, it is not an actual physical space, it is a mental image, a space imagined. Folger designates the pícaro-created heterotopias as a "space of compensation" ("Spatial Disturbances" 64), though in Foucault, this sort of heterotopia is exemplified by a perfectly arranged colony, a space that, though other, has a physical existence. What Folger designates as a heterotopia would be more accurately described as a utopia, as it is a place that mostly exists in the pícaro's mind.

In the picaresque, it is not an entirely separate space, like that of Insola Firme, that represents the achievement of a utopia. Instead, as various opportunities arise, the pícaro creates openings in a space that is usually repressive and exploitative, cracks through which he tries to climb. This structure, in which utopic elements rupture the dystopic space, is remarkably similar to the appearance of dystopic disturbances in the

utopian landscape of the chivalric romance. In the space of the picaresque that is designed to hinder the pícaro at every turn due to his poverty and low birth, and that is, from his perspective, largely dystopic, he creates a type of utopian bubble in the midst of the dystopia. Folger observes:

> As soon as the elites detect the picaresque heterotopical bubble, they intervene brutally. In Quevedo's *Buscón*, the fundamental reason for the violence inflicted upon the *pícaro* is the homogenization of urban space – that is, the elimination of messy picaresque heterotopias. ("Spatial Disturbances" 64)

The knight's function in the chivalric romance was to defeat ever-appearing threats to the chivalry-based system, usually dishonorable knights or monsters, but in the picaresque, it is the threat of the outsider that "the elites" (64) are concerned with, in a way still fulfilling the same function of defense. They are defending themselves from what they perceive as a dystopic threat to their way of life, that is, the entrance into their ranks of those who were not born into them. The elites are effectively defending their space from picaresque utopic intervention.

Thus, what is a dystopic threat for the elite is, for the pícaro, a potential utopic development: the opening of a path for social advancement. A vision in which secret passages are created for even the undeserving to reach higher positions counters the chivalric utopia which the elites subscribe to, in which everybody is satisfied (and therefore remains) in his or her place. Point of view is crucial in the picaresque, which turns to a first-person narrator, allowing for a contrast between these two utopias: a carefully maintained hierarchy, which is promoted by characters who thwart the pícaro's attempts at infiltrating their ranks, and a society which the pícaro promotes, in which he is able to rise up regardless of his origin. However, as the pícaro does not try to rise

through honorable means, the picaresque overall does not quite support the pícaro's utopic vision, as the texts themselves (and by extension, presumably their authors), largely reject the pícaro as a detestable social climber.

Corruption and Authority

The picaresque depicts all its characters as deeply flawed, in sharp contrast to the knight errant. The pícaro's world is populated almost entirely with non-heroic figures that act in reprehensible ways, and there is little difference between the protagonist and his adversaries. If the chivalric romance imagines a just world defended by knights, the picaresque presents an unjust world governed by villains. As Ronald Paulson notes, although crime is often punished in the picaresque, there is "no moral agent to bring retribution, but either a revenger, a prankster, a desperate picaro, or somebody who, by the very act of punishing, succumbs to the degenerate values of this world" (69). Moreover, while knights errant fight for those who cannot defend themselves and the hero of the chivalric romance is, at least on the surface, altruistic, the picaresque focuses on the self, as characters fight for their own survival and advancement, often at the expense of others. There are few lasting interpersonal connections, and those that exist, for example, between spouses, are primarily established for some sort of material gain. Lazarillo's wife thus maintains their lifestyle through her illicit relationship, while Guzmán prostitutes his wife. When bonds are formed that contradict this egocentrism, they tend to have negative consequences, as in the third *tratado* of Lazarillo, in which the pícaro's sympathy and kindness towards his master are repaid with abandonment.

Along with concerning itself with the moral descent of an individual, the picaresque engages with the larger problem of societal decay. The texts depicts overwhelmingly dishonest societies, in which the actions of state and religious representatives are only informed by their own self-interest. In *Guzmán*, there are several episodes which focus on various parts of a deeply flawed legal system. Early on in Part One, members of the Santa Hermandad confuse the pícaro for a thief and beat him[28], although he in no way corresponds to the description of the criminal. The experience causes Guzmán to declare:

> los santos cuadrilleros, en general, es toda gente nefanda y desalmada, y muchos por muy poco jurarán contra ti lo que no heciste ni ellos vieron, más del dinero que por testificar falso llevaron, si ya no fue jarro de vino el que les dieron . . . Y tú, cuadrillero de bien, que me dices que hablo mal, que tú eres muy honrado y usas bien tu oficio, yo te confieso y digo que lo eres, como si te conociera. Pero dime, amigo, para entre nosotros, que no nos oiga nadie, ¿no sabes que digo verdades de tu compañero? Si tú lo sabes y ello es así, con él hablo y no contigo. (Alemán *Guzmán de Alfarache I* 211)

He speaks directly to the reader, initially approaching his audience as potential victims of the overzealous and corrupt members of the Hermandad. As he continues, Guzmán imagines the reader to be one of the *cuadrilleros*, debating him on the topic. In what initially seems to be a concession to this imagined interlocutor, Guzmán asserts that these declarations may not be true of the reader per se, thus seemingly absolving him, while still affirming a culture of corruption. In the second part of *Guzmán*, the narrator criticizes each part of the legal system, including bailiffs, wardens, lawyers, and judges.

[28] This humorous episode in Part One is an instance of carnivalesque violence, as the pícaro, while enduring a beating, thinks: "aunque mucho me dolía, mucho me alegraba entre mí, porque daban al compañero más al doble y recio, como a encubridor que decían era mío" (210) The absurdity of the attack is partnered with the enjoyment of witnessing another's beating, which the reader partakes in.

He says of the office of the judge: "No sé más que te diga, sino que públicamente vende a la justicia, recateando el precio y, si no le das lo que piden, te responden que no te la quieren dar, porque les tienes más de costa y hay otro junto a ti que le da más por ella" (193-194). Not only is justice for sale, but power is wielded without regard for human life, and "eso se le dará que te azoten como que te ahorquen. Seis años más o menos de galeras no importa, que ahí son quequiera. No sienten lo que sientes ni padecen lo que tú; son dioses de la tierra" (194). In the midst of such institutional amorality and abuse of power, which indicates that the only way to succeed in a corrupt society is to become corrupt, the pícaro's tricks and crimes appear justifiable.

In terms of religious authority, more developed religious figures appear in *Lazarillo* than most later picaresque texts. The most elaborated of these is Lazarillo's second master, the priest. The *tratado* which Lazarillo spends with the priest abounds with religious references that are a part of the text's carnivalesque play, as the apparent focus on physical need – in this case, Lazarillo's hunger – replaces a discussion of the boy's starved soul. When the opportunity presents itself for Lazarillo to have an extra key made which would give him access to the chest in which the priest keeps bread, he considers himself "alumbrado por el Spíritu Sancto" (55) with such an idea. He refers to the man who makes the key as "angélico calderero" (55) and "angel" (56). When he opens the chest, he says: "veo en figura de panes, como dicen, la cara de Dios" (55-56), and refers to it later as "mi paraíso panal" (56). Once the priest notices the disappearance of the bread and tries to protect the chest from mice that Lazarillo blames for the theft, the pícaro can no longer eat, only look at the bread. Once alone in the home, Lazarillo

recounts: "por consolarme, abro el arca y como vi el pan, comencélo de adorer, no osando rescebillo" (58). He thus equates the bread the priest denies him with the body of Christ. As the bread comes to represent the Host, the priest's avarice extends beyond the material realm. While he is keeping the boy starved in the literal sense, metaphorically speaking, he is also keeping him away not only from food, but also from God. He actively seeks to undermine Lazarillo, who can only access the bread – the Host, and thereby, the divine – on his own, behind the priest's back. Although it describes the boy's physical hunger, the episode thus indicates that the priest not only fails in providing for his servant in a material, but also in a spiritual sense.

Other ecclesiastical masters, the archpriest and the friar, are also poor representatives of their own religion, guilty of committing deadly sins. While the priest is an example of gluttony, covetousness, and anger, in addition to displaying a complete lack of charity, the archpriest is guilty of lust, and it is distinctly implied that he arranges a marriage between his lover and Lazarillo to cover up his illicit relationship. The friar is a bit of a mystery, as the *tratado* that deals with him is only a few lines long. His sin is similar to that of the archpriest, as Lazarillo states: "éste fue un fraile de la Merced, que las mujercillas que digo me encaminaron, al cual ellas le llamaban pariente" (110). It is notable that Lazarillo says that the women *called* the friar their relative, instead of stating that he was one. This phrasing implies a possible sexual relationship instead of a familial one. The friar, instead of participating in activities expected of him, is "perdido por andar fuera, amicísimo de negocios seglares y visitar" (110-111). Lazarillo complains of wearing out his shoes from so much walking, and the references to walks and visits seem

to imply that the friar either serves as a go-between, or has many lovers, and perhaps even that these "negocios seglares" are conducted with prostitutes. The insistence on the imagery of walking may also be underlining the friar leading Lazarillo away from the right path; perhaps invoking the warning against following the path of wicked men in Proverbs 4:14-15. None of the three ecclesiastical figures appear to be concerned with their flock. Instead of instilling the youth with Christian virtue, each of these characters pushes Lazarillo more towards sin.

The common man is typically no less corrupt than those above him. Lazarillo's blind master, a beggar, is a prime example of this fact. This equality in dishonesty is unsurprising considering the carnivalesque nature of the picaresque. Guzmán's early disappointments are caused by people of his own class, such as the woman who takes advantage of his hunger and gives him food poisoning. Most often, when a character appears to be more noble or altruistic than others, he or she tends to turn out to be just as bad as the rest, to a humorous effect. Alemán develops several characters of this type. In one episode, Guzmán believes that the muleteer with whom he travels early in his adventures joins him out of friendship, but the man asks for payment before they part ways[29]. Later on, the friend that convinces Guzmán to leave the service of the ambassador and travel turns out to be part of a band of thieves who con him out of all of his belongings[30].

There are, however, a few appearances of minor characters that offer help or display virtue. In the first part of *Guzmán*, there is the friar who shares his food with the

[29] Part 1, Book 1, Chapter 8
[30] Part 2, Book 1, Chapter 8

young pícaro without asking for anything in return (269). In the second part, there is the far more developed character of the ambassador who, in spite of his weakness for the ladies that endangers Guzmán, is sincerely fond of the pícaro and displays his kindness in a number of ways. He offers a doctor when Guzmán claims to feel unwell, does not expel him from his home just to improve his good name, and when Guzmán leaves of his own accord, he equips him for the journey (140-141). In *Lazarillo*, there are the women who take his side and defend him when the squire abandons Lazarillo to answer for the debts the squire had accrued. However, even their character is brought into question in the very next *tratado*, when their connection to the friar is revealed (*Lazarillo* 109). In spite of these exceptions, a great majority of characters display few redeeming qualities, and are overwhelmingly representative of a dystopic society in moral decay.

The Shadow of the Inquisition

The picaresque does not tend to directly address the Inquisition, and it certainly does not condemn it. Yet, the atmosphere of the picaresque, in which each person should be suspicious of his or her fellow man, replicates that of life in a "climate of mistrust and mutual suspicion peculiarly propitious for the informer and the spy" (Elliott *Imperial Spain* 219). The Inquisition creates a sort of panopticonism, in which the subject is always observed, or at the very least, always feels as if he is being observed.

The Panopticon, Jeremy Bentham's 18th century architectural design, allows for multiple persons to always be observable from a central tower, without being able to clearly see their observers but knowing that they are there and that their observation is constant. The observers themselves can be surprised at any time, and therefore know they

themselves are under observation. Foucault discusses Bentham's design in *Discipline and Punish*, and concludes that the most important effect of the Panopticon is

> to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary; that this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it; in short, that the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers. (Foucault *Discipline and Punish* 201)

This same effect is achieved by the Spanish Inquisition, which creates an environment of surveillance, in which everyone is both the object and the subject of constant observation.

Instead of a physical Panopticon, the whole of society living through the Inquisition functions as each other's guards and prisoners, always aware of eyes and ears. It is crucial for the Panopticon that the inmate "must never know whether he is being looked at any moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so" (201). The idea that one may be watched and reported by one's neighbors or acquaintances has the same disciplining effect as actual supervision. Thus, there is a breaking of the potentially dangerous crowd into individuals, each for him or herself, separated by fear and mistrust into a solitary existence and rendered harmless, incapable of organizing or revolting. 20th century dystopian classics, especially Zamyatin's *We* (Мы) and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* which it inspires, replicate the Panopticon effect of an inquisitorial system. Zamyatin's characters thus live in glass houses, always aware of their neighbor's eyes on them, while Orwell's creations cannot escape Big Brother's gaze. While in Zamyatin's novel, not even children are safe from being reported for unorthodox thinking or behaviors, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* the children are spies, reporting even their parents.

Both novels feature first person narratives – *We* in its entirety, and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in snippets from its protagonist's journal. Both have a confessional aspect to them, a detailing of D-503 and Winston Smith's crimes, and in both, torture is a punishment for those who transgress.

Without addressing the Inquisition directly, the picaresque similarly presents a society of individuals separated by suspicion and always on the lookout for each other's weaknesses. Not only was the possibility of being accused before the Inquisition a real physical danger for the *conversos*, but there was also the dishonor that such an event brought with it. In addition, there was the threat of financial ruin, since, as Henry Kamen observes: "If a father of a family were penanced by the tribunal, all his property and consequently the property of all his family was forfeited and confiscated. A whole family could in this way be ruined and reduced to beggary if a senior member were accused of heresy" (512). While many critics, such as Ameríco Castro[31] and Stephen Gilman[32], believe that the writer of *Lazarillo* was a *converso*, it should be noted that an author did not need to be a *converso* himself to be sympathetic to their situation, or to be aware of the tension and suspicion which likely resulted from a demand for constant orthodoxy, creating a dystopic panopticonism that the picaresque reflects. As Foucault notes, "The more numerous those anonymous and temporary observers are, the greater the risk for the

[31] In a footnote in his *España en su historia*, Castro asserts, "La máxima novela picaresca, el *Guzmán de Alfarache*, es obra archi-judía; su autor, Mateo Alemán, lo era por el lado paterno y el materno. El anonimato de *El lazarillo* [sic.] *de Tormes* es por demás sospechoso, y es muy probable que su autor fuera un converso." (569)

[32] See Gilman's *Spain of Fernando de Rojas: The Intellectual and Social Landscape of "La Celestina."*

inmate of being surprised and the greater his anxious awareness of being observed" (*Discipline and Punish* 202). During the Inquisition, everyone is such an observer.

Although humorous, the picaresque creates an atmosphere similar to that of the Inquisition, painting every character as somehow dangerous. The pícaros must constantly be on guard, lest they be abused, but they are not always victims – they dole out abuse just as often as they receive it. Moreover, the pícaro is always ultimately found out, and it seems that information travels easily and the pícaro may at any point be required to explain himself. The pícaros' inability to escape their origins is significant in the historical context of the Inquisition and the life of *conversos*, who, aware of eyes always upon them, would have had to be extremely cautious about their every move. The pícaros' attempts to fit into society, and their many failures, therefore parallel the *converso* experience of marginalization. In conjunction with the Inquisition, the emphasis on purity of blood, which could impede one's chances of socioeconomic advancement, is echoed in the pícaros' ultimate inability to achieve their goals.

The effect of creating an atmosphere reminiscent of that of a society under the constant scrutiny of the Inquisition is amplified by the confessional style of the picaresque's first person narratives, as the pícaros simultaneously admit to misdeeds and attempt to gain sympathy from the audience. Gitlitz has argued that *Lazarillo* is a parody of an inquisitional report, as

> autobiographic reporters speak to their Inquisitors as Lázaro speaks to Vuesa Merced. Each one, supplicant and desperate for approval, constructs a Lazarillo who is designed to please, cajole, and lobby. Yet we – their wider public – perceive their inconsistencies and hypocrisies in ways that produce effects radically different from those the authors intended. (71)

Lazarillo reports on his life to an authority figure, including in his narrative events seemingly unrelated to the *caso* in question[33]. He implicates others, shifts blame, and proclaims innocence, all the while addressing at least two different audiences: the person who requested the report and whom he needs to appease, and the wider readership that he addresses in his prologue, and that he wishes to entertain (and, nominally, teach a lesson). When he provides an admission of guilt, of "no ser más sancto que mis vecinos" (*Lazarillo* 8), he speaks of himself in the same way in which he will speak of his wife, who is "tan buena mujer como vive dentro de las puertas de Toledo" (134-135). As it is evident that Lazarillo's wife is conducting an affair with her employer, the statement is ironic: she is as good a woman as any living in Toledo. That is, either all the women of Toledo are innocent, and therefore so is she; or, more likely, they are all, like Lazarillo's wife, ready to sell themselves. The proclamation of innocence is also a proclamation of universal guilt, which, because of its universality, should produce no punishment. As a parody of an inquisitional report, such a conclusion indicates that anyone can be found guilty before the Tribunal, and therefore, perhaps all should be forgiven. *Guzmán* may also be read as a confessional text, as the protagonist's "alleged repentance, and the doubt hanging over it, mimics a typical *reconciliado* who makes a detailed confession to the Holy Office as a condition of being reconciled to the Church" (Yovel 1315). While the format of these texts invokes the Inquisition, the picaros' confessions are jocular and biting, turning the accusing finger back at the "church-police state" (Gitlitz 54).

[33] The *caso* presumably being his wife's illicit relationship.

A strictly orthodox society nurtures duplicity and egocentrism, as self-preservation requires things to be hidden from view. The pícaros have malleable, constantly shifting personas, and repeatedly – and often gleefully - ruin others in order to protect themselves. As Glitz points out, in the inquisitional context,

> the likelihood of being called to account – at least for intellectuals and *conversos* – tended to fragment one's concept of self by requiring one to be constantly aware of how one appeared to others, and to be prepared at any moment to recount the edited version of one's life to an adversarial higher power. (54-55)

There is a doubling in the picaresque protagonist, who maintains a public and a private persona. This doubling mimics the effects of existing in a paranoia-inducing environment of the Inquisition, in which one must always be ready to account for oneself, keeping a meticulous mental log of all events and persons one is associated with, but also ensuring that the report does not result in punishment. Glitz stresses that the pícaro, much like a *converso* afraid of getting under the attention of the Inquisition, "invariably has an ax of some sort to grind: he or she seeks reward, or seeks to avoid punishment, or is under some sort of compulsion from a legal or spiritual authority to give account of him or herself. The narrative voice is compromised, not disinterested" (61). The contrast between his goal (to present himself in a positive light) and the content of his narrative (a multitude of illegal and immoral endeavors) adds to the layers of satire and humor in the texts, and to the need for careful self-fashioning, that is, the "power to impose a shape upon oneself" (Greenblatt 1). As the pícaro's public persona changes according to the situation – the pícaro may be a beggar in one part of the text, and dress himself up as a scholar or a noble in another – the private one remains ambiguous, as the antihero attempts to present himself favorably.

The doubling of the protagonist is most visible in *Guzmán*, in which the first-person narrator recounts his sinful behavior, while also preaching virtue. In light of Mateo Alemán's *converso* status, the text may be read in two different ways. Alemán may be showcasing a devotion to Christianity through the story of Guzmán's sincere repentance, illustrating the possibility of salvation for everyone. Skolnik Rosenberg states:

> The two parts of *Guzmán de Alfarache* inscribe a mix of wariness and hope about the possibility for *conversos* to achieve Christian redemption. Biblical and literary metaphors surrounding the *converso* protagonist in both parts send the message that, although negative characteristics passed down from Jewish ancestors will continually thwart salvation, God will always be ready for a true, interior conversion to a Christian way of life when these converts are ready. (187)

That is, if Guzmán can be reformed and forgiven, so can the *conversos.* On the other hand, Alemán may be using the character of Guzmán as an example of a false conversion, with the protagonist's repentance at the end of the work being one of necessity and self-preservation. That is, Guzmán seizes an opportunity and fashions a new identity, which is just as carefully crafted, and no more or less real than his previous incarnations. It is this version of Guzmán that speaks to us of all his previous personas. The irony in a pícaro presenting himself as an authority on morality points to the narrator's duplicity, and warns against taking his confession, and especially his supposed reformation, at face value. The choices that he has made throughout his sinful life warn against believing his words, as actions speak louder. His act of reporting the brewing rebellion of the galley slaves is not, as he wishes to present it, a choice made for its moral correctness, but one made in hopes of improving his own situation, regardless of danger to others.

In addition to its first-person structure, overall negative worldview and its focus on marginalized characters, the picaresque presents specific episodes that point to a concern with the *converso* experience. In *Lazarillo*, the squire is seemingly obsessed with both honor and cleanliness, and when he arrives home with Lazarillo after their first meeting, "quita de sobre sí su capa y, preguntando si tenía las manos limpias, la sacudimos y doblamos y, muy limpiamente, soplando un poyo que allí estaba, la puso en él" (59). He later asks Lazarillo, while eating his bread, "¿es amasado de manos limpias?" (60) Carmen Elena Armijo convincingly interprets this focus on clean bodies as a reflection of the obsession with *limpieza de sangre*, another result of the discrimination against the *conversos*. The concern is presented as ridiculous, as the *escudero* who is literally starving cares more than anything about the way he is perceived by society, his purity – in actuality, that of his blood – being a crucial aspect of his person. Yirmiyahu Yovel also stresses the concern with honor, and the experience of shame as a result of others' judgement. This is a burden that the pícaro sheds, and one which points to the picaresque's indirect engagement with the Inquisition, "which stands to lose much of its power if social shame is abolished. The greatest public shame in Habsburg Spain was being disgraced in an *auto-de-fe*, second to it was a verdict of 'impure blood,' and both were administered by the Inquisition" (Yovel 1318). Lazarillo chooses not to listen to the gossip and not to concern himself with honor, but to accept his domestic situation as a blessing. Guzmán briefly accepts picardía as a way of life, and lives this existence without shame (chapters 2,3, and 4 of the second book consist largely of a diatribe

against honor and vanity). This refusal to be shamed takes away a means of social control, and is the basis for a unique sense of freedom that the pícaros experience.

In addition to the Inquisition's concern with religious purity, a concern with the purity of blood also spread in Spanish society of the time, arising from a desire to bar *conversos* from public office. An obsession with *limpieza de sangre* spread perhaps in part because it offered another access point to honor. While honor was traditionally reserved for nobility, the focus on purity on blood created an alternative code. As Elliott observes:

> Was it not preferable to be born of humble, but pure Christian parentage, than to be a *caballero* of suspicious racial antecedents? Pure ancestry thus became for the lower ranks of Spanish society the equivalent of noble ancestry for the upper ranks, since it determined a man's status among his fellow men. (*Imperial Spain* 223)

To be able to claim a pure bloodline also allowed those whose nobility may not have been as long-standing to establish their positions more firmly. Of course, some members of the elite begrudged this new claim to honor, which for some noble families was difficult to prove. The tension between the powerful *converso* families and those who had less wealth or influence but could more confidently claim to have pure blood may be the origin of such characters as the cleanliness-obsessed squire in the *Lazarillo,* who sees himself as superior to those who are traditionally considered his betters. Pícaros themselves, usually of questionable origin and often explicitly *conversos* (Guzmán's father is, for example, a caricature of a New Christian, who had also reneged Christianity during his captivity in Algeria), are denied even this alternative path to honor, making their aspirations even more absurd.

UTOPIA IN THE PICARESQUE

Utopia in the picaresque is firstly a recognition and a condemnation of dystopia, which hint at the possibility of a utopic alternative. This effect is achieved through the picaresque's carnivalesque worldview. The carnivalesque makes the social dysfunction democratic, showing how it infests every social class and institution, but it also highlights the possibility of wearing different masks, which level the playing field, and allow for hierarchies to break down or invert, at least temporarily. Instead of a direct discussion of change, such as that in the first part of More's *Utopia*, there is a specter of an alternate, utopic reality, the exact nature of which largely remains unexplored and ambiguous. Utopia in the picaresque is primarily contained in the pícaro's opportunistic view of his dystopic environment, revealed in his unapologetic aspirations, and the development of a sort of individualist utopia through relentless self-fashioning.

Utopian Desire

In an article focused on utopian desire in French literary utopias, Jacqueline Dutton reflects:

> As distinct from the stereotypical (mis)understanding of it as a projection of perfect and reasonable balance, utopia is in fact predicated on desire – the desire for change, the desire for the Other, the desire for that which cannot be achieved in the current order of society. (20)

In this sense, the predominantly utopic chivalric romances reflect a desire for a society which, in contrast to reality, strictly maintains its ideals. Dutton continues:

> While it is clear that desire is inevitable on the conceptual level - even the bleakest of utopian models involves the act of imagining or projecting a different order or society which is triggered by desire in the first instance, it is not always the case that desire is identifiable in the resulting manifestation. (20)

Though initially built on desire, representations of utopia often exclude desire. While Dutton states that dystopias in particular tend to be devoid of desire, continuing desire is rarely explored or even explicitly present in utopias. A reason for the exclusion is that, if a utopia has indeed been achieved, all needs and desires have presumably been satisfied.

Dutton's focus on Cockaigne reiterates that desire present in utopia is a desire fulfilled. The primary locus of utopia in *Amadís de Gaula*, Insola Firme, follows in the Cockaigne tradition of not only the fulfillment of needs, but an excess, as is discernible in the surplus of food and drink on the island. Moreover, the achievement and maintenance of the utopic state indicates a static system: the knight has established a chivalric safe haven, in which nothing much occurs, so that he, his lady and their guests can simply engage in activities of leisure. Desire tends to be eliminated from such a system: not only are most desires already fulfilled, but desire can be dangerous to the system, as it may lead to action that changes it. It is for this reason that many 20th century dystopic texts describe societies which perceive themselves as utopic[34] as trying to prevent new desires, or at least making it difficult or dangerous to pursue such desires. For instance, the society in *Brave New World* runs on desire for sex and entertainment, but it also provides those things. It does not allow for people to desire something different, like poetry. *Amadís de Gaula* reflects the contradiction inherent in the space that simultaneously requires an end to desire and is the fulfillment of desire in its depiction of Insola Firme. Amadís abandons his realm after a brief sojourn, giving in to his continuous need for

[34] *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is an obvious exception, as it describes a society that, according to O'Brien, who serves as a mouthpiece for the system, does not strive to be utopic. See Chapter 3 of Part 3, especially pp. 275-276.

adventure, which is incompatible with the utopic nature of the island. His eventual acceptance of his duties as a ruler (only after a lecture from Urganda) is a sacrifice which allows for a new generation of knights-errant to take his place. The text reveals a tension between utopic desire, which considers the benefit of society, and individual desire, which is centered on the self, and may be in direct conflict with the needs or desires of society at large.

Unlike the knight, who exists in a predominantly utopic world, the pícaro is positioned within a dystopia. The system he inhabits repeatedly denies him even the fulfillment of needs – pícaros are, for instance, often hungry and homeless - in stark opposition to the land of plenty present in the chivalric romance. The materialist aspect of the pícaro's goals is the leisurely existence of the aristocracy, such as that imagined in the Insola Firme. Along with the desire for larger economic capital, the pícaro wants to be accepted, respected and even admired. The utopia at the center of the pícaro's desires is his underlying belief in a society which would reward the individual and overlook his socioeconomic origins. This idea is similar to that of a meritocracy of the chivalric romance, but is also a satiric version of it. The picaresque mocks the chivalric romance's emphasis on merit, when the knight only really rises within his own social class. Although Amadís does not know his own bloodline at the beginning, he is born a prince, and becomes a king; his is not a rags to riches story. The pícaro, on the other hand, actually comes from an ignoble background, and when he tries to rise up, he finds his dreams consistently countered by the less-than-perfect reality.

The pícaro simultaneously stands in opposition to a corrupt society and remains a part of it. The shared utopic ideal of the pícaros is primarily a plentiful existence in a society that would disregard their origins and let them advance. It is a merit-based utopia displaced into a hostile, urban environment that is the upside-down version of the chivalric romance. The pícaros are faced with a culture which appoints villains in positions of power, rewards vice over virtue, and discourages upward social mobility. The strange meritocracy that the picaresque establishes is therefore built on a system of dishonor. Through facing his various adversaries, the pícaro learns to cheat, lie and steal. With an increasing arsenal of tricks and cons, his position improves, at least temporarily – Guzmán manages to pass off as a noble and fills his pockets with others' riches before being sentenced to the galley, Lazarillo finds himself in a position of relative authority, and even Pablos comes close to marrying up. Although most picaresque texts serve at least in part as anti-exempla, therefore ending with another fall, or at least announcing worse times ahead, the pícaro remains focused on his quest of social ascent, and always makes another attempt. Pablos, for instance, after the spectacular failure of his betrothal, decides to try his fortune in the Americas. Though his luck seems not to improve, there is no sense of surrender. The figure of the pícaro thus remains the center of utopic hope in an otherwise dystopic narrative, as he stubbornly refuses to give up, insisting on the possibility of a better future.

The Presentation of Self in the Picaresque

The opening statement of Erving Goffman's *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* reads:

> When an individual enters the presence of others, they commonly seek to acquire information about him or to bring into play information about him already possessed. They will be interested in his general socio-economic status, his conception of self, his attitude toward them, his competence, his trustworthiness, etc. . . . informed in these ways, the others will know how best to act in order to call forth a desired response from him. (1)

Goffman uses theatrical imagery and terminology to discuss human interactions and self-presentation, so that every interaction is akin to a staged performance[35], in which individuals act as actors and audiences (roles that a person may occupy simultaneously), who try to reach a consensus on the meaning of the situation in which they find themselves. This implicit agreement allows for smooth communication, which allows for individuals to avoid embarrassment. Actors manipulate the stage, setting, props, etc., in order to present the desired idea of self.

The pícaro is acutely aware of the importance of self-presentation, as a way of producing a desired reaction in others. As Goffman asserts, "Society is organized on the principle that any individual who possesses certain social characteristics has a moral right to expect that others will value and treat him in a correspondingly appropriate way" (6). Of course, this implies that it is assumed that the person presenting him or herself in a certain way is who they claim to be. The pícaro takes advantage of this social principle and often does not present himself in accordance to his actual social status and characteristics. He takes advantage of the increasing possibility of social ascent, and he often does so by performing roles that are not rooted in his socioeconomic reality. One reason for aspiring to higher strata, according to Goffman, is that it is the high levels of

[35] Goffman defines "performance" as "all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants." (8)

society are the "sacred centre of the common values of the society" (23). This idea, which is wholly embraced by the chivalric romance, that presents knights and ladies as the finest specimens of humanity, some of which become embodiments of chivalric ideals, is mocked by the picaresque, as the social climber finds that his society's ideals are not ideals at all, and no matter how high he climbs, he finds characters who are as sinful, cruel and self-centered as those at the bottom, if better dressed and fed.

The pícaro repeatedly presents himself in a "thoroughly calculating manner, expressing himself in a given way solely in order to give the kind of impression to others that is likely to evoke from them a specific response he is concerned to obtain" (3). While a performer may fully believe his own act, and his audience may do the same, there are also occasions when the performer does not believe his own routine and "may be moved to guide the conviction of his audience only as a means to other ends" (10) This is the behavior of a conman, the true crime of which, Goffman observes in a footnote "is not that he takes money from his victims but that he robs all of us of the belief that middle-class manners and appearance can be sustained only by middle-class people" (10). Though "middle class" would sooner be replaced with "nobility" in the case of the pícaro, his crime is essentially the same.

The pícaro is always eventually found out. Once they are discovered as impostors, pícaros tend to be punished: Pablos, for instance, is beaten when he is revealed to be a commoner posing as a noble. The fact that the pícaro is repeatedly punished does indicate that being a social climber is perhaps even worse than being corrupt within one's appropriate station. There is a sense that, while entertaining, the sort of free-for-all social

climbing that the pícaro embodies is dangerous. While the picaresque's overall carnivalesque atmosphere of equality is achieved in large part through successful performances, they ultimately create a sense of disorder. Goffman's observations explain this effect:

> When we discover that someone with whom we have dealings is an impostor and out-and-out fraud, we are discovering that he did not have the right to play the part he played, that he was not an accredited incumbent of the relevant status. We assume that the impostor's performance, in addition to the fact that it misrepresents him, will be at fault in other ways . . . Paradoxically, the more closely the impostor's performance approximates to the real thing, the more intensely we may be threatened, for a competent performance by someone who proves to be an impostor may weaken in our minds the sacred connection between legitimate authorization to play a part and the capacity to play it. (38-39)

When the pícaro successfully portrays someone of a higher station than himself, he shows that no position is safe from being occupied by undeserving lowlifes. This means that there is nothing inherently different about those who are "meant" to occupy such positions. That is, the idea of a "sacred connection" is weakened. Additionally, if not only those who have "legitimate authorization to play a part" have the "capacity to play it," then anyone can play any part. This is a threat to the hierarchical system, and a thoroughly carnivalesque idea: anyone can wear any mask.

In contrast to the pícaros who perform a higher status than their own and are met with anger and punishment, the knights of chivalric romances will often downplay their social position. Goffman remarks that in real-life interactions, the discovery that a performer is of higher status than he has led this audience to believe, the audience is likely to react "with wonderment and chagrin rather than with hostility" (39). So Amadís changes his name multiple times, re-building his reputation from nothing. When his true

identity is revealed, everybody is surprised and delighted, and he is admired even more. However, Goffman points out, in romances, while heroes often present themselves as being of lower status than they really are, those that make false claims about their status being higher than it is, are usually the villains. In this sense, the pícaro functions the same way as the villain, being a reversed image of the hero of the chivalric romance, and is ultimately denied permanent access to the position he covets.

Narrator's Self-Fashioning

The pícaros are experts at designing a persona to present to the world, and self-fashioning is their main tool. The pícaros' malleability in some ways recalls Amadís's repeated changes of identity. The knight's self-fashioning is rather extreme in that he changes his name and abandons his previous identity for a time, presenting himself as an entirely different character, but the pícaro also exhibits a keen awareness of "the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process" (Greenblatt 2). In fact, Lazarillo's self-fashioning is just as intentional, and more calculated than Amadís's. Each time, regardless of his initial reason for adopting an alter ego, Amadís eventually uncovers his true self, only to gain even more fame from having built up a secondary heroic persona. Rodríguez de Montalvo does not present his behavior as a calculated move, and the reader is asked to perceive Amadís's repeated constructions of dummy rivals, whose achievements are ultimately recognized as Amadís's own, as another happy coincidence for the altruistic knight. While Amadís benefits from this pattern seemingly without intending to do so, the pícaro has few qualms about profiting from the changes to his public persona. When Lazarillo paints himself as the loving husband, or Pablos

presents himself as a nobleman, it is not for the benefit of others, but is usually a ploy to gain social or economic capital. By drawing attention to the benefits of self-fashioning, the pícaro – the dressed-down knight – indirectly questions the motives of the knight errant.

In his analysis of *Lazarillo* as a form of an inquisitional confession, Gitlitz notes that in the confessional narrative,

> the *yo* whose *caso* is on the block adopts a narrative persona who portrays a protagonist who is designed to persuade the jury of Inquisitors to do that *yo* as little harm as possible. The autobiographic reporters speak to their Inquisitors as Lázaro speaks to Vuesa Merced. (71)

In the pseudo-autobiographical picaresque, the older pícaro narrates his own youthful misadventures, in a way which would clear him of culpability, and place much of the blame for his misdeeds on a cruel environment. Self-fashioning and self-presentation are therefore central to his narrative.

The line between the young pícaro and the older narrator is difficult to distinguish. As the grown up Lázaro recounts the events of his childhood, he attempts to present a certain version of himself: a man who overcomes many obstacles and, in spite of his humble beginnings, achieves a certain amount of success – a man, therefore, to be admired, not admonished. A. D. Deyermond provides a useful breakdown of the different layers of *Lazarillo* that inform our view of the text and its protagonist: "1. the events, 2. the young Lazarillo's reactions to them, 3. the mature Lázaro's reflections on 1 and 2, 4. our reactions to 1, 2 and 3" (73). The first layer, the events, is the one that the reader may consider to be factual and accept without much doubt. To do otherwise would have the dizzying effect of being unable to believe any aspect of the text. Yet, even once we

accept the actions in *Lazarillo* to be factual, separating Lázaro's reflections from the thoughts that he presents as those of young Lazarillo is still a difficult task. By conflating the two, the narrator ensures a certain amount of sympathy from the reader.

Lazarillo develops his ability to self-fashion, culminating with his position at the end of the narrative, which requires a very carefully crafted persona. He needs to remain in the archpriest's good graces, as the relationship with the more powerful man allows him a comfortable existence. Considering the gossip surrounding their arrangement, the two men must address the issue directly. Lazarillo defers to the archpriest, who assures him that his wife visits the archpriest "muy a tu honra y suya. Y esto te lo prometo. Por tanto, no mires a lo que pueden decir, sino a lo que te toca: digo a tu provecho" (133). This guarantee may be read in two ways. On the surface, the archpriest promises that there is nothing immoral between himself and Lazarillo's wife, and that Lazarillo should not upset himself over gossip. On the other hand, his final patronizing words are a reminder of the power relations in place. The archpriest announces that, instead of worrying about the gossip, Lazarillo should focus "a lo que te toca" (133), which would imply that the relationship he has with Lazarillo's wife is really none of the pícaro's business. He then adds that the advice is to Lazarillo's benefit, but the word "provecho" may be interpreted here in the sense of profit. That is, instead of focusing on *how* he has found himself in such a fortunate position, Lazarillo should focus on what he has gained. The pícaro's response is clear: "yo determiné arrimarme a los buenos" (133). He had used the same expression when talking of his mother in the first *tratado*, indicating that she "determinó arrimarse a los buenos, por ser uno dellos" (15) Just as she had attempted,

he intends to profit through his association with the archpriest, and use their relationship to his advantage.

While his material state has improved, it would be easy to say that Lazarillo has given up his honor in the bargain. However, as the squire had told him earlier in the text: "no sientes las cosas de la honra, en que el día de hoy está todo el caudal de los hombres de bien" (99). Lazarillo is a pícaro, not an "hombre de bien," and his concerns have always been more focused on physical survival than on honor or morality. The prologue promises to show how a man of humble beginnings can advance in the world, and it seems that Lazarillo believes that he has arrived. In his final paragraph, he draws a startling parallel:

> Esto fue el mesmo año que nuestro victorioso Emperador en esta insigne ciudad de Toledo entró y tuvo en ella Cortes, y se hiceron grandes regocijos, como Vuestra Merced habrá oído. Pues en este tiempo estaba en mi prosperidad y en la cumbre de toda buena fortuna. (135)

Along with the implicit comparison between the pícaro and the Emperor, a grandiose statement of success, the closing words of the text also indicate possible trouble ahead. If this was the time in which Lazarillo was at the height of his fortune, the wheel is probably about to turn. There is no indication, however, that Lazarillo would find the next obstacle insurmountable.

Guzmán is another cunning narrator, whose humorous story of thievery and cons (which he at times commits, and at other times suffers) is interspersed with religious and philosophical musings often centering on morality. These two aspects of the text, and the two aspects of Guzmán (the young man whose adventures are being recounted, and the reformed older man who is recounting them), are somewhat disjointed. In the second

part, Guzmán reminds the reader: "Digo – si quieres oírlo – que aquesta confesión general que hago, este alarde público que de mis cosas te represento, no es para que me imites a mí; antes para que, sabidas, corrijas las tuyas en ti" (Alemán *Guzmán de Alfarache* II 42). This is an echo of the message that Alemán gives in the first volume, in his note to the reader, where he warns, "no te rías de la conseja y se te pase el consejo" and adds:

> Lo que hallares no grave ni compuesto, eso es el ser de un pícaro el sujeto deste libro. Las tales cosas, aunque serán muy pocas, picardea con ellas, que en las mesas espléndidas manjares ha de haber de todos gustos, vinos blandos y suaves, que alegrando ayuden a la digestión, y música que entretengan. (Alemán *Guzmán de Alfarache* I 62)

The duality of the text is thus directly addressed, both by the author's voice in his direct message to his readership, and by the narrator. By making these observations, Alemán prepares the reader for the eventual change in Guzmán's character: the text ends with a supposedly reformed pícaro.

Francisco Rico interprets Guzmán's rehabilitation as genuine, and concludes that the whole point of the text is that the pícaro has the free will to choose the correct path and, eventually, he does. In Rico's view, the sermon-like sections of the novel are therefore not incongruent with the pícaro's adventures. In fact, "mientras las aventuras del pícaro valen como sermones (directamente o *ex contrario*, aduciendo ejemplos positivos o vitandos), los principales sermones sin disfraz valen como aventuras (pues se engloban en el retrato del protagonista)" (Rico 62). That is, the two aspects of the narrative fit neatly together, they are complementary and lead to the same moment of conversion. In this view, it is the conversion that is the main point of the story, and the

text is really an analysis of an internal struggle. Rico states: "Casi me atrevería a decir que son tales momentos de narración *superficial* a las auténticas 'digresiones'" (70) That is, the story is really about Guzmán's spiritual development, not (mis)adventures, and the episodes from the pícaro's life serve a didactic purpose, as do the sermonic sections of the text. However, it seems more likely that the unreliable narrator's rehabilitation is simply another trick, and is not authentic. After all, he tells a multitude of stories in which he adopts whichever persona necessary to get what he desires: why should the role of a penitent be any different? Rico points to moments in the text in which the young Guzmán appears to struggle with his conscience, but of course, as it is the adult Guzmán that tells the story, it is likely that these moments are, much like his moralizing, a part of his self-presentation as a reformed man.

Besides, the moments that Rico cites as proof of Guzmán's internal moral struggle can be interpreted as simply humorous, as they highlight the contrast between how the character is being perceived and what he is actually thinking. One of the examples that Rico cites is when Guzmán gives a purse of money to a friar, presenting himself as honest, when in fact his feigned honesty is a part of a con. As the friar compliments him, Guzmán feels pangs of regret: "Cuando aquesto me decía daba lanzadas en el corazón, porque, considerada su santidad y sencillez con mi grande malicia y bellaquería, pues con tan mal demio lo querpia haver instrumento de mis hurtos, reventáronme las lágrimas" (Alemán *Guzmán de Alfarache II* 470). Rico uses this as an example of a true inner conflict. However, in the rest of the chapter, Guzmán not only gives a detailed description of this con, but also narrates how it led him to his next victim, as the friar

vouches for him and Guzmán enters the service of a lady who he then robs. When the friar offers to be his guarantor, Guzmán says, concluding the chapter: "Acetélo de Buena voluntad, viendo ir por aquel camino mi negocio bien guiado. Que no hay cosa tan fácil para engañar a un justo como santidad fingida en un malo" (472). This moment leads to Guzmán's final crime before being condemned to the galley. Although there is the brief mention of regret that Rico focuses on, Guzmán is here relating the events that led to his capture, which in turn leads to his supposed reformation. As he details how the con was done, how it benefitted him, and how gladly he accepted the next opportunity to be dishonest, there is little to mark his tears as genuine, and not a part of the ruse. In fact, Guzmán could be playing the friar with an act of humility, or the reader, adding in the tears as a way of making the change in him more believable. He even concludes the chapter with what can be read as advice for any considering to follow in his footsteps, and effectively equating goodness with gullibility. Ultimately, the episode is humorous: the friar's naiveté which leads him to be an unknowing participant in not one, but two cons; the perception he and his parishioners have of Guzmán contrasts sharply with the reality of the situation; his mother's over-the-top but convincing performance as the owner of the lost purse and the final touch of leaving a tip for the finder add up to a comical, not a solemn or particularly didactic episode.

Rico insists that Guzmán's story is narrated in the first person because all adventures and all the sermonizing, no matter how seemingly different at the beginning, logically lead to the pícaro's rehabilitation. However, a more obvious and more likely reason for the apparent incompatibility of the adventures and the lengthy moral lectures is

that they do not naturally go together, but are forced together by a narrator who is trying to paint himself as a reformed man. Rico believes that the story has to be a first-person narrative to show the internal struggle that man's free will causes. While this reading is not unbelievable, it is more probable that the first person unreliable narrator allows the reader to recognize Guzmán's spiritual development as the final in a series of tricks.

While the text claims, and indeed occasionally appears to be straightforwardly didactic, and the pícaro's adventures seem to be meant as anti-exempla, the didacticism of the text is in fact far more convoluted. The morally flawed narrator is trying to present himself as a rehabilitated man, but his untrustworthiness – illustrated in a multitude of earlier episodes where he uses others' gullibility to manipulate them – warns against believing in his moral and spiritual change. The real lesson is ironic: while the narrator is supposedly teaching the reader about morality and choosing the right path, the reader is aware of his duplicity. He may end up learning the same lesson – do not be like the narrator – but not directly. The narrator is inadvertently, by failing at his ultimate attempt at self-fashioning, giving a negative exemplum of how to think and behave.

Though the pícaros may often be mistreated and frustrated by their position at the bottom of the social hierarchy, their ability to self-fashion and thereby relatively easily occupy different positions (albeit temporarily) is utopic in itself. It shows the illicit openings in an otherwise rigid society, which tries to safeguard the privileges of its elite. Pablos only fails at his effort to marry into aristocracy when he is recognized by Don Diego. Until Don Diego's reveal, however, he convinces everyone that he is of high status. Guzmán even manages to convince his uncle, who in an earlier episode played a

trick on him, that he is an entirely different person. Both pícaros just as easily embody nobles as they do beggars, students or servants. They quickly and easily change their identity to occupy the most convenient position possible in the situation in which they find themselves. The picaresque often shows the ill effects of attempting to climb one's way up – perhaps most notably in the case of Pablos – but it acknowledges the possibility of such movement. This possibility, uplifting and utopic as it is for the pícaro, is a menacing and dystopic element in the view of the upper classes. The pícaro, therefore, must be punished. Since the ability to don different masks and successfully present oneself in different ways to different audiences is the basis of the picaresque utopia, this final failure reasserts the overall dystopic nature of the text.

THE PRINCE AND THE PÍCARO

Curiously, the pícaro exhibits many traits Machiavelli assigns to a successful ruler, for whom self-presentation and self-fashioning are crucial. Though occupying social positions which may be considered opposites, Machiavelli's ideal prince and the pícaro are both cunning individuals focused on reaching and maintaining their goals through practical means, with less concern for traditional morals than for the achievement of their ambitions.

A connection between the picaresque and Machiavelli has been established by several critics. Arturo Marasso claims that *The Prince* influenced *Lazarillo de Tormes*, as the prince and the pícaro both use their shrewdness and do not shy away from deception to achieve their goals. Joseph V. Ricapito examines *Lazarillo* in conjunction with *The*

Prince and Machiavelli's and play *The Mandrake*. He asserts Machiavelli's works as sources and examines the Machiavellian elements in the picaresque texts, stating:

> As the characters of the *Mandragola* [*The Mandrake*] appear on stage, as the Princes and their counsellors deceive their way through the affairs of state, as Lazarillo passes through life, they all know that man is impelled by this [sic.] own selfish egoistic desires and needs, that necessity excuses all acts no matter how base. Like an embryonic prince, a natural man in the midst of the human republics, Lázaro knows what the basic rules for the game of life are; and they apply to himself as they do to all others – Kings, princes, as well as paupers. Because of this insight, Lázaro can function effectively in his social context. (163)

As the pícaro reflects the prince, and the prince reflects the pícaro, the differences between them fade. Divisions are erased in a carnivalesque "game of life" (163) that everybody participates in.

Machiavelli asserts that a successful prince should be aware that "Fortune is the mistress of one half our actions, and yet leaves the control of the other half, or little less, to ourselves" (66). Similarly, one may have divine favor, but "God will not do everything himself" (69). To attain their goals, neither the Prince nor the pícaro should simply depend on Fortune or Providence. The belief that he is able to control his Fortune, at least to an extent, is at the heart of the pícaro's relentless optimism, as he never simply accepts what appears to be his fate. The pícaro persists and is proud to, as Lazarillo puts it, arrive to a safe port in spite of the abuses of Fortune. That is, Lazarillo is proud to be taking on roles that should be outside of his reach. Writing in answer to Vuestra Merced's request, Lazarillo has a particular goal in mind: to give an account of his life and show how far he has come. He makes a special note of his achievements in spite of what Fortune gave him to start:

> porque se tenga entera noticia de mi persona; y también porque consideren los que heredaron nobles estados cuán poco se les debe, pues Fortuna fue con ellos parcial, y cuánto más hicieron los que, siéndoles contraria, con fuerza y maña remando salieron a buen puerto. (*Lazarillo* 11)

Lazarillo wishes to present the experience of social ascent of a person like him as a more admirable achievement than being born into nobility. His path is perhaps not that which Fortune had planned for him, but he does not let his disappointments stop him from trying again. In some ways, he does overcome the obstacles of his low birth, and manages to improve his position. However, if pícaros have free will, and their fates are not dictated by Fortune, this also means that any immoral choices they make are their own responsibility. The picaresque therefore condemns its own narrators, along with every other corrupt character it describes.

Similarly, while Machiavelli draws different paths to power, he does not exactly resolve the Prince of moral responsibility. He notes that "to slaughter fellow-citizens, to betray friends, to be devoid of honor, pity, and religion, cannot be counted as merits, for these are means which may lead to power, but which confer no glory" (21), but he nonetheless provides advice to a man who may wish to follow "paths of wickedness and crime" (21). Ruthless violence is simply one of the ways to power, and Machiavelli lays them all out in a comprehensive way, driven by practicality and achievability. In this, *The Prince* is the antithesis of *Amadís*, which asserts that all problems can be resolved by adhering to the chivalric code. The pícaro follows a philosophy similar to that of Machiavelli. While he does not exactly attain power in a traditional sense, he achieves (at least limited) upward mobility. It is the acquisition of social and material capital that drives him, and he chooses the path that seems to lead most directly to those goals,

finding that, as Pablos notes in *El Buscón*, "facilidad y dulzura se halla siempre en las cosas malas" (Quevedo 224). While the pícaro self-improves and achieves a kind of upward mobility, he does not rise to the highest office like the Prince. In fact, in spite Lazarillo's job as the town crier, the pícaro rarely if ever achieves any sort of official position, power or superiority. While he parallels the Prince in some ways, he is ultimately a parody of the Prince, settling for much less than actual, political power.

Still, both the Prince and the pícaro must recognize that

> The manner in which we live, and that in which we ought to live, are things so wide asunder, that he who quits the one to betake himself to the other is more likely to destroy than to save himself; since one who would act up to a perfect standard of goodness in everything, must be ruined among so many who are not good. (Machiavelli 40)

To be successful in the world presented by Machiavelli, one must recognize its dystopic nature. This view is in contrast to "many Republics and Princedoms [that] have been imagined that were never seen or known to exist in reality" (40). Machiavelli thus rejects the idea of a utopia founded on the idea of perfect goodness, as men are, in his view, "thankless, fickle, false, studious to avoid danger, greedy of gain, devoted to you while you are able to confer benefits upon them . . . but in the hour of need they turn against you" (43-44). Working with such human material, the Prince must accept that "there may be a line of conduct having the appearance of virtue, to follow which would be his [the Prince's] ruin, and that there may be another course having the appearance of vice, by following which his safety and well-being are secured" (40). He thus reveals that vice and virtue often distinguished simply by the end result – that which has the *appearance* of vice, may for the Prince turn out to be a virtue, and vice versa. This relativity appears

in the picaresque, as well. The pícaro's surroundings are both a dystopic moral wasteland, and a land of unorthodox opportunity. It is precisely the systematic dysfunction of his society that creates the openings for the pícaro's changes in fortune, a utopic side-effect of the dystopia.

Although Machiavelli's view seems in contrast with utopia, which typically has many precautions in place to prevent power-hungry and immoral individuals to take it over, in some ways, his is simply a different utopic vision, one akin to that of the pícaro. Machiavelli's book is a manual, which discusses a variety of potential problems, but ultimately offers an answer for each of them. In a way, each difficulty is an opportunity, if the Prince knows how to seize it. Although Machiavelli dedicates the book to Lorenzo de Medici, and in the final chapter calls on him to play the part of the Prince, the figure that Machiavelli imagines is not a person who exists in reality, but is an idealized model of a leader who is capable of making the correct choice in every circumstance. Machiavelli's political motivations (winning the favor of the Medici so that he may return from exile) must be considered a great influence on his words of dedication, and his apparent choice of Prince is therefore less convincing. After all, he notes that many others had seemed to be chosen for this task, only to fail. He asserts that, although the positive examples he had provided were "singular and extraordinary, after all they were but men" (69), and, they each appear as an illustration of only some aspect of the ideal Prince, but do not embody all of them.

Most of what Machiavelli suggests can be boiled down to self-fashioning. The Prince must be aware of and careful about the image that he creates of himself. Machiavelli puts it plainly:

> It is not essential, then, that a Prince should have all the good qualities which I have enumerated above, but it is most essential that he should seem to have them; I will even venture to affirm that if he has and invariably practices them all, they are hurtful, whereas the appearance of them is useful. (Machiavelli 46)

The way in which the Prince manipulates his image is by carefully presenting himself as best suits his circumstances in each of his interactions. The Prince should

> be very careful that nothing ever escapes his lips which is not replete with the five qualities above named [be merciful, faithful, humane, religious and upright], so to see and hear him, one would think him the embodiment of mercy, good faith, integrity, humanity and religion. (47)

It is not necessary, and can in fact be harmful, to actually embody those virtues. What matters is that the Prince always present himself in this light, by carefully managing his image in every encounter. Considered in Goffman's terms, the Prince should on most occasions try to give a convincing performance of being honorable and righteous, since "Every one sees what you seem, but few know what you are, and these few dare not oppose themselves to the opinion of many" (Machiavelli 47). This is also the philosophy of picaresque characters. Not only Lazarillo, but also his masters, follow the same logic, fashioning themselves to fulfill the expectations of those who enable their positions.

As the Prince will not be able to remain in power against the will of the people without much difficulty, keeping the populace happy is a part of being a successful ruler. This is another way in which *The Prince* is utopic: the focus on gaining and maintaining power ideally produces a perfect princedom, since "it is essential for a Prince to be on a

friendly footing with his people" (25). Therefore, when choosing between satisfying the nobility and the people, the Prince should carefully consider the power the people hold, as he "can never secure himself against a disaffected people, their number being too great, while he may against a disaffected nobility, since their number is small" (25). This advice, which demands the weighing of power between three distinct entities - the people, the nobility and the ruler – underlines the fickle nature of utopia. The interests of the people tend to be opposed to those of the nobility, as "the people desire not to be domineered over or oppressed by the nobles, while the nobles desire to oppress and domineer over the people" (24). Therefore, one group's utopic vision would necessarily clash with the other's. The picaresque utopia, presented from the point of view of the subaltern, contrasts in this sense with that of *Amadís*, which is focused entirely the privileged elite, who are maintained and attended by a happy-to-oblige and largely invisible servile class.

Class perspective – from below or from above – is a crucial element in judging the pícaro's world as utopic or dystopic. The pícaro's attempts at social advancement, while rooted in deep self-interest, in fact go beyond himself, as they assume an environment in which a person may change his social destiny. His effort presupposes a possibility of a fluid, permissive society, with less rigid class distinctions. In a way, the pícaro achieves this fluidity, as he is often able to successfully fashion himself depending on the situation. The more open society, in which one can reinvent oneself, is a threat to the upper classes' necessarily conflicting utopic vision.

The picaresque is as much a dystopic vision of the life at the bottom, as it is the upper class's dystopic view of the increasingly encroaching lower and middle class. As Dunn reminds us,

> from the 1520s the sale of *hidalguías* (titles of nobility) by the crown to raise money (a practice begun by Ferdinand and Isabella, the "Catholic monarchs") was increasingly resorted to. Hence, as men became wealthy from manufacturing or commerce or administration, they could acquire noble status and then pass on achieved status as ascribed status to their successors by acquiring land. The class structure was penetrable by the 'haves,' those with money, though, as usually happens, the *nouveaux-arrivés* did not welcome the next climber. (120)

Ultimately, the picaresque itself does not glorify, but actually rejects the pícaro as the worst sort of social climber. The possibility of the likes of him managing to enter the upper layers of society causes anxiety, not only in the nobility, but in the middle class, as well. According to Dunn, in comparison to the nobility, the bourgeoisie were concerned with being

> the obvious victims of frauds and swindles. They were less removed from that obscure reservoir of violence, more precarious in their own social place. They lacked appropriate class definition, recognition, authority. Unlike the nobles, they did not have the protection afforded by an aristocratic caste system . . . Below the bourgeois were the artisans, the laboring poor, the apprentices, and, too close for comfort, the unruly mob of vagrants and picaros. But there were no marked boundaries between them; only such moral boundaries as they might project upon their world. (303)

The upward mobility at the time was "limited and controlled" (303), but possible. The carnivalesque approach of the picaresque focuses on the erasure of differences and removes the comfort of boundaries between classes, providing an image of disorder as a result of increased possibility of social mobility which would potentially allow a pícaro to find his way into the higher levels of society.

The egocentrism of the pícaro's narrative – told in first person and with only his

own destiny in mind - in a sense radically narrows the space of the utopia to only encompass an individual's experience. That is, for the pícaro, a utopic society is one which would allow for the attainment of his personal goals. However, although the picaresque focuses on the experience of an individual, the pícaro is one of many. The texts present not only other pícaros, but swindlers and social climbers of every sort, and warns of the rogues infiltrating positions that do not traditionally belong to them. While their personal vision is narrow and egotistical, there is a certain power in their numbers, as they are able to disrupt the traditional hierarchical order.

CHAPTER CONCLUSION

The dystopic undertone of the Early Modern Spanish picaresque is largely achieved through simultaneously invoking and inverting familiar chivalric romance patterns and tropes in the comparatively realistic setting of the picaresque. While the fiction of chivalric romance exaggerated the positive and created an environment built on lofty ideals, the picaresque shows a carnivalesque interest in everything that is low – poverty, bodily needs, vices, and an overwhelmingly environment of violence, mistrust, and materialism.

The environment in which the pícaros exist is one that calls for careful self-presentation and self-fashioning. While the texts do not directly address or criticize the Inquisition, they take a carnivalesque approach to its dystopic influence. The first-person narratives are reminiscent of confessions, yet filled with humor and irreverence. There is a doubling in the narrator, who attempts to present himself in a positive light, in spite of recounting violent and morally dubious acts and adventures. The pícaros' ability to self-

fashion successfully is one of his main survival techniques in a hostile world. It is also a surprising way towards the achievement of his highly individualistic utopic vision. His individualist philosophy is reminiscent of that of Machiavelli's Prince, particularly in his thirst for social advancement with little regards for traditional morals.

The pícaro frequently focuses his efforts on an integration into the system of power by acquiring social capital, be it through attempts of marrying up, acquiring wealth, or merely as passing off as someone other than himself. All of these routes require a careful fashioning of the self, as well as excellent performances in the various roles the pícaro takes on. In showing a variety of the pícaro's performances, as well as those of his supposed betters, the picaresque illustrates that, for its apparent differences, every position requires a performance. In Goffman's words:

> In attempting to escape from a two-faced world of front region and back region behaviour, individuals may feel that in the new position they are attempting to acquire they will be the character projected by individuals in that position and not at the same time a performer. When they arrive, of course, they find their new situation has unanticipated similarities with their old one; both involve a presentation of front to an audience and both involve the presenter in the grubby, gossipy business of staging a show. (81)

And in fact, the picaresque indicates (in contrast to Goffman, whose study is of people, not characters, and for whom the following is an extreme on a spectrum), every performer is largely insincere and calculated in his performance. So Lazarillo's miserly priest carefully performs charity for his parishioners, while starving his boy servant. The fact that everyone is always performing draws attention not only to the characters' duplicitous nature, but also to status privilege. The fact that an outsider is able to successfully perform nobility already questions the assumption, common in the chivalric

romances, that nobility of character is passed through blood along with titles. Whether or not its authors intended it to, the picaresque shows not only that nobility can be enacted by those who are not themselves nobles, but that it also must be consistently performed by those who are actually of noble status. This last point means that the inheritance of privilege through blood, based on assumptions of superiority, may also be questioned.

Ultimately, the pícaro is not so much interested in changing his environment, but in changing his position within it. Although the pícaro's personal vision is extremely narrow, it presupposes a possibility of social ascent for even the lowest of individuals, and is actually a political and philosophical stance. However, his implied utopic ideal is fickle. While the pícaro wants to reach a point where his perspective would shift, and he would acquire a utopic view of the society that abuses him, much as in the case of the knight, the actual achievement of his goal would mean a re-examination of the utopic/dystopic nature of the vision he had been chasing.

Chapter Three: A Socialist Romance Scorned: *What Is to Be Done?* and Its Detractors

The cultural and political importance of Nikolai Chernyshevsky's 1863 novel *Что делать?* (*Chto delat'?; What Is to Be Done?*) cannot be overstated. The text takes the format of an amorous romance novel to propagate a political message, focusing primarily on the idea of intellectuals playing a crucial role in the upcoming Russian revolution. As Joseph Frank observes, in terms of its political influence,

> . . . no work in modern literature, with the possible exception of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, can compete with *What Is to Be Done?* in its effect on human lives and its power to make history. For Chernyshevsky's novel, far more than Marx's *Capital*, supplied the emotional dynamic that eventually went to make the Russian Revolution. (68)

The novel's initial effect extended into the 20th century. Lenin even used the title of Chernyshevsky's novel as the title of his own 1902 pamphlet, in which he argues for a political party which would educate workers in Marxism. A vanguard that spreads Marxist ideas among the workers, thereby preparing them for the revolution, is present in Chernyshevsky's text, in which the young professional Vera Pavlova educates the workers in her cooperative workshop. In titling his own work after Chernyshevsky's, Lenin pays homage to the work that first radicalized him, and presents much the same ideas, but in a different form. In *Encounters with Lenin*, he is reported to have said:

> My favorite author was Chernyshevsky. I read and reread everything in *The Contemporary* down to the last line . . . Before my acquaintance with the works of Marx, Engels, and Plekhanov, only Chernyshevsky had a major influence on me, an overwhelming influence. (Valentinov 106)

The novel, which Chernyshevsky wrote in prison, was published in serialized form in the *Contemporary*[36], and although further editions were forbidden, these first copies "were preserved with immense piety, as though they were family heirlooms. For many members of the younger generation the novel became a true 'encyclopedia of life and knowledge.'" (Walicki 190) The Russian youth imitated the characters' actions, setting up communal and cooperative ventures, or engaging in revolutionary activity (Drozd 10-11).

As discussed below, Chernyshevsky wrote his text as a romance, and so love, and most prominently romantic love, is one of the central themes of the novel, through which questions such as political engagement and gender relations are examined. The fact that Chernyshevsky wrote the text a romance is often considered to simply be a disposable and somewhat embarrassing cover that allowed Chernyshevsky's text to avoid censorship. The author was imprisoned at the time of writing, and was forbidden from writing essays or articles, but was granted the request to write a novel. The fact that the novel slipped by two different censors is remarkable, as is the fact that the journal's editor lost the subversive manuscript and retrieved it with the help of the police[37]. However, the format actually serves to echo his political message, and it is therefore indispensable. It allows Chernyshevsky to outline the values of an ascendant intellectual and political class through a familiar narrative of the quest, but one in which the revolution becomes the holy grail.

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[36] It is unclear how the novel passed by the censors. Most critics subscribe to the view that it was simply a blunder of the censors combined with extraordinary circumstance – others believe the government covertly encouraged the publication of a text they believed could harm Chernyshevsky's reputation; others still believe it to have been a public relations effort. A succinct summary of the theories can be found in the introduction to Andrew M. Drozd's *Chernyshevskii's What Is to Be Done?: A Reevaluation*.

[37] This fascinating story seems to almost always be recounted when the text is discussed. Drozd offers a lengthier description of the incident in *Chernyshevski's What Is to Be Done?: A Reevaluation*, pp. 5-9.

In spite of its influence, Chernyshevsky's utopic text was not without detractors. Fyodor Dostoevsky's and Yevgeny Zamyatin's answers to Chernyshevsky's utopic novel initiated the development of what was arguably the most popular formulation of dystopia in the 20th century - the totalitarian science fiction novel. Dostoevsky's 1863 novel *Записки из подполья* (*Zapiski iz podpol' i͡a; Notes from Underground*) is written largely as an answer to Chernyshevsky. As M. Keith Booker has stated:

> it might not be strictly accurate to describe any of the individual works of Dostoevsky literally as dystopian fictions, his works anticipate the modern development of dystopian fiction in striking ways. Much of Dostoevsky's work arises directly from a sense that the idealistic visions of nineteenth-century thinkers like N. G. Chernyshevsky might lead not to utopian dreams but to dystopian nightmares. (Dystopian Literature 64)

When Booker talks about "modern development of dystopian fiction," he is primarily referring to the science fiction dystopias, and more specifically, the totalitarian science fiction dystopias[38]. A direct line can be drawn from Dostoevsky's carnivalesque inversion of *What Is to Be Done?* to this popular subgenre.

Though Orwell's *1984* is perhaps the most famous piece of dystopic science fiction, it was strongly influenced by Zamyatin's dystopic novel *Мы* (*My*; *We*). Borrowing heavily from Dostoevsky's *Notes*, *We* turns the utopianism in Chernyshevsky's socialist romance into a science fiction dystopia and becomes the founding text of the iconic subgenre of the totalitarian science fiction dystopia. Although

[38] While most science fiction dystopias are totalitarian science fiction dystopias, there are exceptions, in which the focus is not on a totalitarian political regime, but on some other aspect of society. For instance, H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine* is one such text, as it is primarily concerned with capitalism and class, and does not depict a totalitarian government.

these texts lack a pícaro protagonist, there is a kinship between them and the picaresque, as they create dystopic environments as a rebuttal to utopic romances.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE AS A ROMANCE

As Jean Ratford comments,

> It is possible to argue about 'romance', as Raymond Williams has about 'tragedy', that the only continuity is the term: that there is no historical relationship between Greek 'romances', medieval romance, Gothic bourgeois romances of the 1840s, late nineteenth century women's romances and mass-produced romance fiction now – except the generic term. (8)

Indeed, a chivalric romance like *Amadís de Gaula* seems to have little in common with *What Is to Be Done?*. Yet, Northrop Frye's work on romance make the connection clearer. As Frye's definition is quite broad, it is most clearly delineated when romance is considered against tragedy, comedy and parody. Romance, in Frye's view, deals primarily with the quest, and depending on the type of the quest, texts as diverse as detective stories, science fiction and so-called *chick lit*[39] can all be categorized as romance. Romance primarily focuses on amorous relations and on adventure: "The central element of romance is a love story, and the exciting adventures are normally a foreplay leading up to a sexual union" (Frye *Anatomy* 24). The heroes' exploits may take different forms, so the adventures of a detective would be different from those of a young woman looking for marriage, but they both involve elements of sex and violence - even

[39] *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* defines chic lit as a kind of fiction aimed at female readers, which depicts the "misadventures of contemporary unmarried working women in their 20s or 30s who struggle with multiple pressures from reproachful mothers, inadequate boyfriends, and tyrannical bosses while consoling themselves with shopping trips, chocolate, and erotic daydreams."

if sex is only alluded to, or spoken of metaphorically[40]. In detective fiction, for example, a new kind of knight errant faces the villains in his world and protects the innocent as he or she resolves one crime after another. There is a strong sense of itineration as the detective visits the crime scene, searches for clues, and investigates suspects. Just as "dragon-killing and giant-quelling of chivalric romance suggests a civilizing force gradually increasing its control of a turbulent natural order" (Frye *The Secular Scripture* 173), so each resolution of a crime mystery points to a society's control over the dark basic urges of humanity. As the goal is to return to a life before the incident, the detective must ascend from the darkness that is the crime, through finding the solution. The point of these narratives is, in part, to rationalize the existence of our justice system; yet just like in the chivalric romance, the successful detective always receives another case, and his story continues – he never seems to actually make a dent in the criminal world he is fighting.

Romance is a vehicle for utopia, and even those romances which do not feature an explicitly utopic space are haunted by a utopic vision. In Frye's view, "romance is nearest of all literary forms to the wish-fulfillment dream . . . The perennially child-like quality of romance is marked by its extraordinarily persistent nostalgia, its search for some kind of imaginative golden age in time or space" (*Anatomy* 186). While the text's utopianism may be implicit, as in detective fictions where the protagonist attempts to achieve a world without crime, many texts feature an explicitly utopic vision, which occupies a particular

[40] Anne Rice's 1976 gothic horror novel *Interview with the Vampire* is a clear example of a romance which only refers to sex indirectly. The text details a vampire's quest for knowledge and love, replacing explicitly sexual encounters with acts of vampirism, which are essentially metaphorical representations of sexual acts.

space within the romance, such as Insola Firme or the future Russia of Vera Pavlova's dream. These spaces are often "a union of past and future in a present vision of a pastoral, paradisal, and radically simplified form of life" (179). The agricultural utopia of a new Russia in *What Is to Be Done?* is a remarkable example of this, as it brings the Edenic past back through the use of futuristic technology.

Romance, beneath its adventurous and often amorous plot set around a quest of some kind, can also deliver a political message. Frye asserts:

> In every age the ruling social or intellectual class tends to project its ideals in some form of romance, where the virtuous heroes and beautiful heroines represent the ideals and the villains the threats to their ascendancy. This is the general character of chivalric romance in the Middle Ages, aristocratic romance in the Renaissance, bourgeois romance since the eighteenth century, and revolutionary romance in contemporary Russia. (*Anatomy* 186).

Naturally, the utopic society imagined in *Amadís* is very different from the one Vera dreams up in her fourth dream, as they reflect different ideologies. The novel's ultimate political aims, and the utopia that it proposes differ greatly from the Early Modern Hispanic chivalric romance. Underneath *Amadís de Gaula*'s obsession with love and adventure, there is an exploration of social hierarchies and marital relations as means of social ascent. The chivalric romance imagines a sort of meritocracy that allows for the hero to advance, though largely within his own class, thereby reiterating the class structures already in place. The utopia that Rodríguez de Montalvo describes relies on class distinction, as Insola Firme would not function without a laboring class fulfilling the needs of the leisure class. Although like *Amadís*, *What Is to Be Done?* utilizes a romance plot of love triangles and relies on a chivalric ethos, it quite explicitly advocates for social

changes in the real world. *What Is to Be Done?* marks the ascendancy of socialism, and is best described as a "kidnapped romance." Frye notes:

> In every period of history certain ascendant values are accepted by society and are embodied in its serious literature. Usually this process includes some form of kidnapped romance, that is, Romance formulas used to reflect certain ascendant religious or social ideals. (*The Secular Scripture* 29-30)

Chernyshevsky uses the romance frame as a vehicle of representation for a new ascendant intellectual and political class. His choice to present his political message in the form of a romance is therefore less confounding than it may initially appear.

While the romance form may have been utilized in part as a means of diminishing the suspicion of the censors, this form of presentation also allowed for the readers to identify with the heroes of the text and experience an emotional reaction. As "all the reader's values are bound up with the hero" (Frye *Anatomy* 187), he or she joins Chernyshevsky's "new people"[41] on their quest, the holy grail of which is the achievement of the revolution. The fulfillment of the quest is preceded by a "sequence of minor adventures leading up to a major or climacteric adventure" (Frye *Anatomy* 187): rescuing Vera from her family and an unwanted marriage; the setup of Vera and Lopukhov's lives together; the suicide ploy; the establishment of the sewing cooperative; etc. A peculiar feature of Chernyshevsky's novel is that the great adventure – the revolution - could only ever be referred to elliptically. While it cannot be explicitly named, it is the logical conclusion of the series of minor adventures.

[41] That is, the radical intellectuals and revolutionaries.

Rational Egoism and the Chivalric Ethos

Chernyshevsky centers the novel's action around a common romance trope, the love triangle. Although the novel's plot is partially a device used to present a sociopolitical philosophy, and therefore cannot be read simply as a straightforward love story, it is nonetheless filled with familiar chivalric spirit. While promoting a new sort of man and seemingly breaking with tradition, the novel simultaneously reasserts chivalric ideals. At the beginning of the novel, Vera is a damsel in distress, enduring a tyrannical mother and unwanted advances from a suitor, Storeshnik. The man breaks all rules of chivalry, slandering Vera by claiming that they have been having an affair. One of the men hearing Storeshnik's lies observes: «он, так другой, все равно. Да вот, посмотри, Жан уже думает отбить ее у него, а таких Жанов тысячи, ты знаешь. От всех не убережешь, когда мать хочет торговать дочерью» ("If it isn't he, it'll be someone else – it's all the same. Look here, Jean is already hoping to win her over for himself. And there are thousands like him, you know. When a mother decides to sell off her daughter, you can't protect her from everyone")[42] (Chernyshevsky 22; 63). The comment shows the unbalanced relationship between the sexes, as well as the potentially toxic nature of the family unit. Yet, against all odds, Lopukhov manages to save Vera from this situation, by appropriating and adapting the corrupted institution of marriage. He emphasizes that his actions are not the result of a self-sacrificing spirit. In fact, Lopukhov is acting for the greater good, in line with ideals of rational egoism, which is - perhaps unsurprisingly,

[42] All translations of *What Is to Be Done?* are by Michael R. Katz.

considering Chernyshevsky's choice of genre in composing *What Is to Be Done?* – quite compatible with the chivalric spirit.

The ethical philosophy of rational egoism is based on the assumption that people will ultimately always act in their own self-interest. The judgment whether an action is good or bad is based on how advantageous or detrimental it is to the person or group assessing it. Considering the great variety of personal and group interests, whatever brings most happiness or pleasure to the greatest number of people should be the correct course of action. Andrzej Walicki points out that the philosophy of rational egoism that Chernyshevsky puts forth in his novel

> differs widely from what we normally understand by egoism. Chernyshevsky used the term 'egoism' for his ethical theory as a challenge to those who, in the name of transcendent values, condemned as 'egoism' all attempts by the oppressed to better their lot; it was a symbol of his distrust of ideologies that called on men to sacrifice themselves for the sake of allegedly higher aims – higher, that is, than man himself conceived as a living concrete human individual. (196)

In fact, the rational egoism that Chernyshevsky presents in his novel often looks like altruism, as the rational choice of long-term personal benefit corresponds with the common good. A rational egoist understands that what is good for the community is good for the individual, who is more likely to thrive in a more prosperous society. Because the protagonists of *What Is to Be Done?* are enlightened individuals who clearly see that assisting their community to prosper is the most beneficial path for each person, their egoism is never harmful to society.

The narrator insists on qualifying the main characters – Vera Pavlova, Kirsanov and Lopukhov – as ordinary people, and their extraordinary virtue is presented as simply

an understanding of the principles of rational egoism. Thus, when Lopukhov and Vera become engaged as a means of releasing her from a bad family situation and from a suitor she is not interested in, Lopukhov thinks:

> Вот и будет сокрушаться: «ах, какую он для меня принес жертву!» И не думал жертвовать. Не был до сих пор так глуп, чтобы приносить жертвы, — надеюсь, и никогда не буду. Как для меня лучше, так и сделал. Не такой человек, чтобы приносить жертвы. Да их и не бывает, никто и не приносит; это фальшивое понятие: жертва - сапоги всмятку. Как приятнее, так и поступаешь. (97)
>
> That will distress her. 'Oh what a sacrifice he made for me!' But I hadn't been planning to make sacrifices. I haven't been foolish enough to make any so far, and I hope I never will. I did what was best for me. I'm not the sort of person who makes sacrifices. No one is. It's a fallacious concept. Sacrifice is all stuff and nonsense. One does what's most pleasurable. (149)

That is, Lopukhov does a good deed because he cares for Vera, and therefore assisting her is pleasurable to him. In spite of a clear ideological difference - the knight errant only seems to be concerned with his own social class - this impulse is in some ways reminiscent of *Amadís de Gaula*. Knights errant are the protectors of their communities, and behind their actions is the same two-prong drive: on the one hand, the desire for a better, safer society, and on the other, the egotistical pleasure they derive from being lauded as heroes, and the possible sexual reward, if the woman they are assisting is also a love interest. The knights' egoism is somewhat clandestine, but it is central in this socialist romance.

The insight that the characters of *What Is to Be Done* have into their own psyches, and their ability to understand and predict how events would unfold is remarkable; as such, they fail to be convincing as the everyman and everywoman. Chernyshevsky includes the character of Rakhmetov, the "revolutionary Superman" (Frank 78), as an

example of an extraordinary man, in comparison to whom the others should appear more humanlike. Nonetheless, Lopukhov, Vera Pavlova and Kirsanov all function as role models, as they embody – albeit to an extent less extreme than the revolutionary Rakhmetov – socialist ideals. While the narrator would have them pass for ordinary, they have much in common with the traditional hero. In Frye's view, "success of the hero derives from a current of energy which is partly from him and partly outside him. It depends partly on the merit of his courage, partly on certain things given him: unusual strength, noble blood, or a destiny prophesied by an oracle" (*The Secular Scripture* 67). It is easy to see that Amadís is such a hero, but in fact, some of Chernyshevsky's characters are written in the same tradition. The differences in people's moral choices are supposed to arise primarily from their socioeconomic circumstances; and the narrator says of Vera's scheming mother: «Ваши средства были дурны, но ваша обстановка не давала вам других средств. Ваши средства принадлежат вашей обстановке, а не вашей личности, за них бесчестье не вам» ("The means you employed were bad, but your environment provided you with none other. The means belong to your environment, not to your personality; the dishonor is not yours") (Chernyshevsky 112; 168). However, the text refutes this assertion, as the pure spirit of the heroine who grows up in the shadow of such a mother seems unaffected by her upbringing. There is a sense that the heroine is in fact born good, and through learning and actively doing good, she only becomes better – a sort of mixture of nature and self-fashioning, strangely reminiscent of the chivalric heroes of royal blood who nonetheless only really come into their own through

repeatedly enacting the chivalric ideals. Her destiny is prophesied in her own dreams, and she becomes one of the new women largely through her own works.

Even though the novel is meant to promote socialist ideals and serve as a call to action, it does not resist the "pervasive social snobbery" (Frye *The Secular Scripture* 161) of romance. Romance tends to focus on the upper echelons of society – in the naive romance, royalty is the focus (as in *Amadís*), and nobility is not only a personal trait, but tends to be reflected in the heroes' social status, as well. Even bourgeois heroes are often more sophisticated than other characters around them, and belong to the upper middle class. Chernyshevsky does not resist this romantic tendency, and he makes his socialist superman, Rakhmetov, a descendant of « фамилии, известной с XIII века, то есть одной из древнейших не только у нас, а й в целой Европе» ("a family known since the thirteenth century, that is, from one of the oldest families not only in Russia but in all of Europe") (Chernyshevsky 205; 275). This fact does not exactly go against the spirit of the novel as a whole, since one of Chernyshevsky's main goals is to get the intelligentsia and the upper classes invested in his cause, and serve as leaders and teachers for others. Rakhmetov lives as if he were just a simple student, though he is - due in part, it would seem, to his extraordinary breeding - anything but an ordinary man.

Although he is a member of the landed gentry, Rakhmetov lives as the peasants: he eats only the food available to them; he dresses modestly; he does grueling physical work such as hauling barges not only to become stronger but also because «это дает уважение и любовь простых людей» ("It inspires respect and love of the common people") (Chernyshevsky 208; 279). Yet, he is in no way the everyman. He needs no

rest; he reads a few books and understands everything, having no need to read others; he is able to impose an extremely regimented and ascetic lifestyle on himself. He even sleeps on a bed of nails, an echo of saints' self-mortification. His revolutionary activity is not discussed directly, but there are many allusions to it, for instance, the mention that, while he would be abroad for extended periods of time, «года через три он возвратится в Россию, потому что, кажется, в России, не теперь, а тогда, года через три-четыре, «нужно» будет ему быть» ("he'd return to Russia because it seemed that there – not now, but then, in three or four years – it would be 'necessary' for him to be in Russia") (217; 291). This is a prophecy of the revolution, and also of Rakhmetov's role in it – another common thread between him and the traditional chivalric hero, who is destined for greatness.

Andrew M. Drozd's book *What Is to Be Done?: A Reevaluation* proposes a new, non-traditional reading of *What Is to Be Done*. Drozd's analysis is of particular interest because he approaches the novel as a work of literature, and not merely a piece of political propaganda. He is skeptical of asceticism being proposed as a viable path, and judges that "Rakhmetov's story is clearly not what is to be done" (130). He interprets the narrator to be opposed to Rakhmetov's lifestyle, and takes the narrator's supposed judgement as indication that Rakhmetov is not a model to be emulated, but is in fact a ridiculous, absurd character whose behavior is discarded as inefficient (118). However, Drozd does not consider that the narrator – who appears as a character in the text - may himself just be an ordinary person, at the level of Vera Pavlova, and therefore cannot be expected to understand or be able to emulate the revolutionary superman. A misreading

of the narrator also leads Drozd to misinterpret Rakhmetov's character. Rakhmetov's rejection of enjoyment of such worldly pleasures as food and sex does indeed seem at odds with Vera Pavlova's love for merriment and chocolates, and the vision of sexual freedom present in the fourth dream. However, Drozd does not consider that perhaps Vera Pavlova's characterization purposefully marks her as ordinary, and her vices and pleasures are introduced for that reason, and not to refute Rakhmetov's position. Neither Vera nor the reader can be expected to reach Rakhmetov's level of commitment. He is a model to be approximated, but not necessarily reached, as the hagiographic descriptions of his character imply[43]. Moreover, if there is a rejection of extreme asceticism in the text, it is because a character like Rakhmetov would naturally not fit into the post-revolutionary utopia described in the fourth dream. While his type is necessary for the revolution, once it has been achieved, he would no longer be needed. There would be no need for asceticism, which in Rakhmetov is inspired by his love for the people, as all people would have everything they need.

A Revolutionary Quest

What Is to Be Done may appear to be a parody of a romance [44], but such an assessment would not be entirely accurate. It is true that Chernyshevsky utilizes a

[43] The connection to saints is amplified in that Russian narratives of monks' and saints' lives are filled with quests and itineration. Antonius, for example, wanders from monastery to monastery before finally building a crypt and a church and starting a monastery (Zenkovsky 105-108). Theodosius, inspired by Antonius, attempts pilgrimages in spite of his mothers' wishes, and suffers for his faith. The prophecy of his eventual greatness is fulfilled when he founds a monastery, attracting many monks, and counseling those who are tempted by the devil (116-134).

[44] For example, Morson and Emerson consider it as such in *Rethinking Bakhtin* (69), and Drozd discusses how Chernyshevsky subverts and parodies the adventure novel, which is a type of romance (see especially pp. 63-67).

familiar plot – a girl not wanting to be married off against her will – and resolves this initial conflict relatively easily and quickly, only to introduce a love triangle, which he then resolves in an unconventional manner. As Drozd rightfully notes, the traditionally harmful situation quickly ends in a happy ending for everyone involved, an innovation in a common pattern (65). In addition to Drozd's observations, the fact that Chernyshevsky's narrator also interrupts the story in a manner reminiscent of the first book of *Don Quixote*, would at first glance seem to affirm his thesis that *What Is to Be Done* mocks the predictability of a tired genre[45]. However, contrary to Drozd's reading, Chernyshevsky does not actually make these moves to mark his novel as a parody of a romance, nor does he reject the romance, or use the format ironically. Chernyshevsky's version of the romance is simply a different expression of it, one not concerned primarily with romantic love. The characters refer to the upcoming revolution as *невеста*, that is, a fiancée or a bride, reinforcing the familiar structure of the story ending in a marriage – though not a literal one. Like a bride, the revolution is courted and after the marriage (that is, after its achievement), it moves into the service of the husband, that is, of the people. Drozd notes that, after the resolution of the romantic plot – the love triangle – the story unexpectedly continues for two more chapters. However, he offers no explanation for this innovation, except that Chernyshevsky is trying to alter a familiar pattern. Drozd does not seem to realize that the reason for this change is that the love story is simply a minor conflict that needs to be resolved, but is not the holy grail of this journey. The predictability and the ease with which characters resolve familiar conflicts is not a

[45] For example, the narrator enters the text at various points to discuss how the story is progressing with his readers, discusses their expectations due to genre conventions, and writes himself in as a character.

rejection of the romance, but a means drawing attention to a change in the nature of their quest, the final goal of which has changed. Vera Pavlova's previous marriages are stops on her path towards the ultimate commitment: revolutionary activity.

Drozd also argues against the standard reading of the novel as thinly veiled revolutionary propaganda and instead proposes that Chernyshevsky's apparent didacticism is just a ruse. In his view, the novel is "generally devoid of what might be called blatant didacticism" (48) and Chernyshevsky in fact

> baits and forces his readers into a misreading of the novel, intentionally flouting traditional aesthetic principles, to demonstrate that art should be free: creating and interpreting art by a prescribed set of immutable aesthetic criteria inherently diminishes and impoverishes it. (47)

While it is true that Chernyshevsky's text should not only be read as propaganda, but as literature, Drozd judges, rather arrogantly, that most critics, and most readers in general, have been unable to see through this trap and therefore have been misreading the novel. He builds his reading on the idea that Chernyshevsky's novel is a snare, and therefore nothing that is said in it should be taken at face value. His analysis assumes that everything that is stated either has multiple meanings or a meaning opposite to the one expressed. However, this approach, which claims the text cannot be trusted to mean anything it states, seems to simply open the door to any and all interpretations, without the ability to truly ground one's reading in the text itself. Strangely, even as he makes this claim and builds his own interpretation upon it, Drozd dismisses other readings of the text, effectively contradicting himself.

Overall, Drozd judges the genre of the novel to be that of a *bildungsroman*, following the development of Vera Pavlova. While the text is undoubtedly a

bildungsroman in part, its genre is certainly not as unambiguous as Drozd makes it out to be. Approaching it from the *bildungsroman* angle allows Drozd to take Vera Pavlova as the central character, thereby diminishing the importance of statements made by other characters. Yet, Drozd will not identify Vera Pavlova as the mouthpiece for Chernyshevsky, and instead considers the narrator to be the closest to the author's own opinion. Since Drozd approaches the text as "a complex work of literature with the irony, ambiguity, multiple layers of meaning, and even multiple interpretations that this implies" (47), the preference given to the narrator seems naïve, as does the assumption that he is closest to expressing the views of Chernyshevsky himself. Although early on Drozd notes that the narrator cannot be identified as the author, his remarks consistently seem to contradict that assertion. His statement that "there cannot be a straightforward identification of the views of the narrator and those of the characters" (78) is indeed correct, but he continues: "When the characters express opinions on certain topics they are expressing their own views, not those of the narrator, nor those of the even more distant author" (78). In spite of making a gesture of discarding the simplification of author's views being reflected in the narrator, he still identifies the narrator as the most reliable representative of the author, and gives him preferential treatment, mistakenly assuming that the narrator is at least one step closer to Chernyshevsky's own views than other characters. He notes whenever the narrator expresses the characters' views as their own[46], without subscribing to them, as if that was a reliable measure of a distance

[46] For example, Drozd states: "Chernyshevskii has constructed the positive, enthusiastic descriptions of the sewing co-op so that they must be attributed not to his narrator (or to himself) but only to his characters."

between the characters and the author's intended reading of the text, implying the narrator as a superior authority.

Drozd's concern with Chernyshevsky's presence in his own narrative drives him to read the novel through Chernyshevsky's other writings, and insists on an interpretation that would allow for reading of his *oeuvre* that eliminates any contradictory statements. Drozd goes so far as to claim: "Far from advocating or propagating utopian socialism, Chernyshevskii's [treatment of utopianism] seeks to combat its influence upon the younger generation" (170). and indeed that "the positive political program that is so often attributed to the novel is nowhere present" (173). The dismissal of such a program is based mostly on Drozd's injudicious dismissal of Chernyshevsky's characters.

Most importantly for the present discussion, Drozd argues that:

> although the reader is presented with characters who are clearly utopian in their ideology, their personality, or both, the text is constructed so that the reader must interpret this utopianism as an early, by no means sufficient stage of the development of the characters. It is presented not as a positive model to be followed, but as a mere fancy that will pass. (150)

Drozd claims that, just as Vera outgrows the co-op, so she will outgrow utopian socialism, as the dream that she has is that of a naïve young girl, and should not be taken seriously. However, assuming that the text's utopianism is equivalent to a character's naiveté is an oversimplification. Additionally, even if characters or the reader recognize the supposedly naïve nature of a utopia, it does not automatically follow that they reject it, especially since the co-op is in fact not the ultimate representation of utopia in this text. Drozd's assertion that the female characters involved in the co-op are "young and

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(148) Similar conflations of the narrator's views with those with the author appears frequently in Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

naïve, and can in no way share an identical viewpoint with the narrator" (147-148) is irrelevant, along with being yet another indication of his conflation of the narrator with the author[47].

More convincingly, Drozd notes:

> An important feature of the sewing co-op as it functions in the novel is its identification with the female characters during the early stage of their development as budding social activists. Their involvement in the co-op represents not the culmination of their development but only a particular, rather early stage. (148)

Indeed, the sewing co-op is a worthwhile and commendable achievement, but it is realized within the constraints of a rotten system. It is therefore only a stepping stone on the way to the revolution. However, contrary to Drozd's conclusion, this fact in itself is not a condemnation of such an effort, although Vera's sewing cooperative does not seem to function as well without her. It instead stresses the impossibility of the permanent maintenance of a heterotopic space within a larger dystopic environment, functioning as social criticism rather than a wholesale rejection of co-ops. It further emphasizes the need for a revolution and a new system which would allow the goals of the co-op to be achieved in a way that is impossible in Vera's own society. Drozd himself notes that "Chernyshevskii attempts to show that they [the co-ops] are by no means sufficient to bring about the desired changes in society; something more is needed" (155), but he does not seem to realize the relevance or the point of this within the structure of the romance, where the "something more" becomes the ultimate goal of the quest.

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[47] At another point in his argument, Drozd states: "The incredible naiveté and simplicity with which the first dream is presented seem to indicate that it is merely the vision of a seventeen-year-old character, and not that of actual author (age thirty-four at the time of writing the novel)." (158) This statement reflects the critic's overwhelming and misplaced concern with how the author is or is not reflected in his characters.

Utopia in What Is to Be Done?

Perhaps the most famous section of Chernyshevsky's book is Vera Pavlova's fourth dream. While some of Vera's dreams – such as the one in which she reads her own journal and comes to term with her dissatisfaction with her first marriage – express the characters' psychology, others almost amount to a political manifesto. Vera's fourth dream describes post-revolutionary life in a sort of techno-agrarian utopia, in which «то, что могут по средствам своей компании все, за то нет расчетов; за каждую особую вещь или прихоть — расчет» ("what everyone can afford together is provided free; but a charge is made for any special item or whim") (289; 372). The goddess of love who takes Vera Pavlova on a tour of this space is the embodiment of «равноправность» ("equal rights") (287; 369), and Vera observes machines doing most of the work in the fecund fields, while the people live in quarters that are Chernyshevsky's version of the Crystal Palace[48], built of aluminum and crystal, and illuminated by electric light.

Utopic Space

As Marin notes, utopia has a critical function. "The representation of the ideal city, of its mores, institutions, and laws – precisely because it is picture and representation – conjures up, as a negative referent, real society; it thus encourages a critical consciousness of this society" (79) Chernyshevsky's utopia is a criticism of the Russia of his time, and an idealistic manual of how to effect actual change. It is in Vera Pavlova's fourth dream that Chernyshevsky provides the most complete physical representation of a socialist utopian space.

[48] The text makes an explicit reference to the Crystal Palace, designed by Joseph Paxton for the London World's Fair in 1851, and moved to Syndenham.

One of Marin's definitions of utopia is: "Utopia is an ideological place where ideology is put into play; it is a stage for ideological representation" (239). *What Is to Be Done* does this on two levels. On the first level, there is the overall utopic tone to the narrative, which features characters slowly building a better society within the confines of a realist narrative. Throughout, the text serves as a stage for socialist ideology and the philosophy of rational egotism. That is, Chernyshevsky's "ordinary people" should inspire the everyman and everywoman to emulate their ways of thinking and behavior in the real world. This level of utopia is closer to reality than that represented in the fourth dream; it is meant to be – despite the contradiction in terms - an achievable utopia. The second level, that of the dreamscape of the fourth dream, is another, more extreme formulation of the same ideology, which is temporally displaced. Its achievement, while prophesized within the novel and suggested as a real possibility, is presented through science fiction and fantasy imagery, such as advanced and unavailable technology and the existence of goddesses who speak to mortals. It is therefore depicted as the ideal to strive for, but that would not be literally achieved.

This space, located within a dreamscape, is both real – not only in that a dream is real for the dreamer, but also because of its apparently prophetic nature, as Vera's previous dreams came true – and unreal, lacking a physicality within Vera Pavlova's reality. The access to this utopia is enabled through a dream, but it is in some ways a travel narrative, and Vera's experience is akin to that of a tourist with an expert guide, a device that is quite common in literary utopias. In Frye's view, as the tourist observes the society he or she is being introduced to,

> rituals are apparently irrational acts which become *rational*[49] as their significance is explained. In such utopias the guide explains the structure of the society and thereby the significance of the behavior being observed. Hence, the behavior of society is presented as rationally motivated. ("Varieties" 26)

Vera's guide explains the reasoning behind all the new things she observes – the use of new materials, the changes in climate and geography, the activities the people engage in, the reason for their seeming satisfaction. The society appears to be engineered perfectly rationally, with an explanation provided for every aspect about which Vera inquires.

Vera does not participate in any activities; she only observes them. The text here resembles a travel narrative:

> a type of narrative where the story becomes involved with geography. The successive thread that connects it does not do so through a connection of events, accidents, or narrative actors. Rather, it ties together places that, as a circuit, constitute the narration. More precisely, it is a narrative whose events are places that appear in the narrator's discourse only because they are the various stops on an itinerary. These stops or stages can be marked out by incidents, accidents, or meetings . . . But these events are not the essential elements; they are added only as signals of a possible 'memorization.' (Marin 42)

The text comments on various geographical features of the landscape, and allows the reader to place them on a map, even if that placement cannot be entirely accurate. The communal acts of the inhabitants are of interest, but there are no particular events or actors that take precedence over the space and its geographical and sociopolitical arrangement. Vera realizes that the place she is visiting is actually Russia, but not because she recognizes its features. She asks: «Неужели ж это мы? неужели это наша земля? Я слышала нашу песню, они говорят по-русски» ("Is this really us? Is that really our country? I heard one of our own songs and they are all speaking Russian")

[49] Emphasis not added

(Chernyshevsky 289; 372). While this world is too changed for her to recognize it, the sounds – the language and the songs of the people – remain the same, as a celebration of the Russian people and culture.

In spite of the confusing geographical changes, Vera's guide points out: «Ты видишь невдалеке реку, - эта ока» "you see that river not far from here? It's the Oka" (289; 372). Some of the natural features of the landscape remain the same, proof of the impending reality of this place; yet others are changed to become more beneficial to humans. Mountains that were barren or infertile are now used for farming, while a former desert becomes fields. Although this future greater Russia is described, and could mostly be outlined on a map, it does not yet exist, and therefore, it cannot actually be inscribed yet; it is at once existent, and imagined. The imagined aspect of this space invites the reader to project his or her own plans and desires onto it. As it does not yet exist, it is not yet under anybody's control, and could therefore belong to anyone, allowing a fuller immersion into the fantasy, and providing a wish-fulfillment element to it. The future country that the text describes would, in part, occupy the space of Chernyshevsky's Russia on a map, but the reference to the view as the land «про которую говорилось в старину, что она 'кипит мопоком и медом'» ("that once upon a time was called 'the land of milk and honey'") (291; 374) indicates a possibility of extensive Russian expansion, echoed in the words: «С каждым годом, вы, русские, все дальше отодвигаете границу пустыни на юг» "With each passing year you Russians are pushing back the edge of the desert farther to the south" (291; 374). The "desert" in question is not only physical, but refers to a socio-political setup which would get pushed

out. The dream is therefore also an announcement of a new colonialism, which is an aspiration that Chernyshevsky's novel shares with *Amadís*.

Utopic Time

Frye comments that utopia is "not a future ideal but a hypothetical one, an informing power and not a goal of action" ("Varieties" 36). However, in contrast to this definition, Chernyshevsky's text overtly fashions itself as a prophecy, to be achieved through the actions of its readers. The world that Vera sees in her dream is therefore temporally located in the future. This temporal dislocation is the opposite of that which we see in chivalric romances, which rely on a sort of imagined past, but is typical of the post-industrial revolution utopias, which engage with the question of technological advancement. The goddess – that is, the embodiment of equal rights - describes each period of human history, and in particular the relations between the sexes, up until the moment in which Vera is living, and discards them, announcing:

> …я еще не могу высказывать всю мою волю всем. Я скажу ее всем, когда мое царство будет над всеми людьми, когда все люди будут прекрасны телом и чисты сердцем, тогда я открою им всю мою красоту. Но ты, твоя судьба, особенно счастлива; тебя я не смущу, тебе я не повредю, сказавши, чем буду я, когда не немногие, как теперь, а все будут достойны признавать меня своею царицею. Тебе одной я скажу тайны моего будущего. (Chernyshevsky 287)

> At this time I can't reveal my will fully to everyone. I shall do so only when my kingdom encompasses all people. When everyone becomes beautiful in body and pure in heart, then I will reveal all of my beauty to them. As for you, your fate is particularly fortunate. I'll neither confuse you nor harm you in describing to you what I'll be like when everyone becomes worthy of acknowledging me as their goddess, as opposed to now, when there are still so few. To you alone I will reveal the secrets of my future. (269)

After this announcement of a utopic future, there is an ellipsis in the text. The chapter containing Vera Pavlova's fourth dream is divided into sections; the seventh section consists simply of two rows of dots, lacking any text. This empty space between the two rows marks the revolution, an event which cannot be discussed directly, but without which the next section, which describes the world in which the goddess rules, cannot come to be. It receives its own place on the page, as it must receive its place in history, although it is, as of yet, unwritten. The two parallel lines of dots are the historical period preceding and following the revolution, never touching and separated forever by the event that is to occur: a before and an after. A new goddess, a sister to equal rights, and the embodiment of wisdom and love for humanity joins the tour at the beginning of the next section, and gives Vera a glimpse of the post-revolutionary future.

Utopic Lifestyle

Frye stresses: "The ideal or desirable quality in the utopia has to be *recognized*[50], that is, seen as manifesting something that the reader can understand as a latent or potential element in his own society and his own thinking" ("Varieties" 39). In Chernyshevsky's text, this is not only true philosophically, but every aspect of the world that Vera Pavlova witnesses in her dream is described in comparison to the world familiar to her. The glass building is such that «теперь ни одного такого» "now there's no other building like it" (Chernyshevsky 287; 369), and the fields that surround it «только не такие, как у нас, а густые, густые, изобильные, изобильные.» "aren't like the ones we have now; rather they're rich and abundant" (287; 369). The fruits borne of the fields are

[50] Emphasis not added.

also unlike any available in the present; they are more perfect, and there are no diseases among the plants. There is an abundance of food, which is easily gathered and requires no hard labor, as machines do most the work. While on Insola Firme, there is a largely unseen force gladly providing the necessary labor, in Chernyshevsky's socialist vision, everybody participates in the work made easy by the technological progress that benefits everyone. The lifestyle preserves the bodies of the workers, so that «стариков и старух очень мало потому, что здесь очень поздно становятся ими» "there are really very few old men and women here because people grow old very late" (288; 371).[51] Each of these characteristics serves as a contrast with Vera's – and Chernyshevsky's – world.

Everything in the fourth dream is arranged for a communal lifestyle, but there is an emphasis the availability of personal choice. For instance, everyone eats together in giant halls, much like in Utopia, but «кому угодно, обедают особо, у себя» "those who prefer to eat in their own rooms dine there" (289; 371). In addition, while the regular, everyday food on offer is impressive, everyone has the right to get even better fare. The same arrangement applies to other aspects of life: «то, что могут по средствам своей компании все, за то нет расчетов; за каждую особую вещь или прихоть — расчет» ("what everyone can afford together is provided free; but a charge is made for any special item or whim") (289; 372). Similarly, as the seasons change, most of the population abandons the area, and moves to a more pleasant location – but some still remain, who

[51] Children and the few elderly make themselves useful, as well, as they "prepare food, do the housework, clean the rooms – this work is too easy for other hands . . . It's appropriate that such tasks be done by those who aren't yet able or no longer able to do anything else." (Chernyshevsky 372) Ironically, for all the praise of physical labor and the supposed utility of all type of work, there is a certain disdain towards housework, only appropriate for children and those unable to do anything else – as if the cleaning and maintenance of a building made almost exclusively of glass would be an easy task.

prefer the experience of the cold; there is, therefore, freedom of movement. There is, similarly, a lot of choice in leisure activities, which are available at all times, and people engage in them joyously, enjoying them in a way impossible for people who experience daily deprivation or suffering. The goddess concludes the tour of by asking of Vera: «Говори же всем: вот что в будущем, будущее светло и прекрасно. Любите его, стремитесь к нему, работайте для него, приближайте его, переносите из него в настоящее, сколько можете перенести» "Tell everyone that the future will be radiant and beautiful. Love it, strive toward it, work for it, bring it nearer, transfer into the present as much as you can from it" (294; 379). The dream is both a prophecy and a call to action. Vera has, in fact, already been working towards this future, creating spaces in which the socialist ideals are applied on a smaller scale.

In addition to the images of the future Vera Pavlova witnesses in her fourth dream, there are heterotopic bubbles[52] throughout the text. Vera Pavlova's sewing workshop is one such place, and it grows to encompass the workers' living quarters. Unlike the dreamscape, the workshop is an actual space, an "effectively enacted utopia" (Foucault 24), with the goal of:

> всевозможная одинаковость пользы от работы для всех, участвующих в работе, каковы бы ни были личные особенности . . . а характер мастерской, ее дух, порядок составляется единодушием всех, а для единодушия одинаково важна всякая участница (Chernyshevsky 134)
>
> the greatest possible equality in distribution of the fruits of labor for participants in the enterprise, regardless of their personal characteristics . . . the nature of the workshop, its spirit, and its order considered in the unanimity of all; to achieve this unanimity, each participant was equally important. (193)

[52] These are utopic microcosms in the midst of the dystopia.

The organization grows to include communal housing and rearing of children, and becomes not only a workshop, but a school for the workers. One reads to the others as they work, and these readings grow to become lessons outside of working hours. This is an arrangement reminiscent of More's *Utopia*, in which citizens tend to spend any free time in socially beneficial activities, taking advantage of daily lectures. The readings in the sewing workshop eventually turn into more structured lectures, delivered by invited intellectuals.

The home that Vera shares with her husband initially appears to be such a heterotopic space, as well. However, as it is the direct result of the exploitative relations in place, it is inferior to Vera's relationship with her second husband. The second marriage is not forced upon her by any external factors, and is entirely the product of mutual love and admiration. Still, none of the heterotopic bubbles reach the same purely utopic status as the palace and the fields of Vera's dream, because utopia cannot be achieved until the revolution takes place. Until then, dystopic elements from the world surrounding the bubbles are too disruptive.

DYSTOPIC ANSWERS TO CHERNYSHEVSKY

The utopianism that permeates Chernyshevsky's text culminates in Vera's fourth dream, which provides a description of an ideal society. The novel's characters initially work towards this goal in ways that are available to them within the confines of their society. The lengths at which the heroes are required to go to break the suffocating confines of their positions – such as Lopukhov's pretend-suicide – indicate the dystopic nature of the society in which they exist. This dystopic backdrop is necessary as a

contrast to the utopic vision presented later: the abusive family relations are juxtaposed with the cohabitation of like-minded individuals who all contribute to their community; the impossibility of escape from an unfulfilling marriage is countered by the sexual freedom that is found in the fourth dream; the poor working conditions are compared first to the conditions of the co-op and later the pleasurable work in the fields. The novel also highlights the dangers of working towards change, and the possibility of arrest or torture, indicated most clearly in Rakhmetov's statement, after he sleeps on hundreds of nails, that this act is «Проба. Нужно. Неправдоподобно, конечно; однако же, на всякий случай нужно. Вижу, могу» ("A trial . . . It's necessary. Improbable, of course, but in any case necessary. Now I know I can do it") (Chernyshevsky 215; 288). Spatially, this dystopia is, unsurprisingly, located in the urban environment, its confined spaces contrasting the open fields and shiny walls of the comfortable living spaces in the fourth dream.

Although Chernyshevsky intentionally presents Vera's reality as dystopic, especially until her first husband frees her from her familial prison, it is his utopic vision that has often been interpreted as dystopic, as is clear from the literary responses of such authors as Dostoevsky and Zamyatin. In their own fiction, they vehemently attack the worldview proposed in *What Is to Be Done?* and, in effect, offer a dystopic reading of the novel. Dostoevsky engages with *What Is to Be Done?* most directly in his *Notes from Underground*, which dismantles Chernyshevsky's utopic vision.

Dark Carnival

In his *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin devotes a chapter to the carnivalesque origins of Dostoevsky's work. He highlights profanation, the "lowering of

status and bringing down to earth" (101), and the suspension of normal order of things, especially

> the hierarchical system and all the connected forms of fear, awe, piety, etiquette, etc. . . everything that is determined by social-hierarchical inequality among people, or any other form of inequality, including age. All *distance* between people is suspended and a special carnival category goes into effect – the *free familiar contact between people*.[53] (Bakhtin *Problems* 101)

A familiarization of elements normally separated by hierarchy, and the arrangement of those elements into new combinations is typical of carnival, as it "brings together, unites, weds and combines the sacred with the profane, the lofty with the lowly, the great with the insignificant, the wise with the stupid, etc" (101). These features enter literature through a process of carnivalization, and continue to influence artistic production, even after it is distanced from actual carnival and its folk origins. Bakhtin notes: "From the second half of the 17th century carnival almost completely ceases to be a direct source of carnivalization, relinquishing its place to already-carnivalized literature; thus carnivalization becomes a purely literary tradition" (108). Unlike the early Spanish picaresque, which may have been more directly influenced by carnival itself, the carnivalesque elements in Dostoevsky seep in from the literary carnivalesque tradition that precedes him.

Bakhtin classifies Dostoevsky's work as menippea[54] and goes on to analyze it through a carnivalesque lens, asserting that by "analyzing the genre characteristics of the menippea in Dostoevsky's works we simultaneously revealed the elements of

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[53] Emphasis not added.

[54] The basic definition of menippea offered by the *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* is: "A form of intellectually humorous work characterized by miscellaneous contents, displays of curious erudition, and comical discussions on philosophical topics." Frye offers his own definition in *Anatomy of Criticism* (309).

carnivalization in them" (Bakhtin *Problems* 131). He mostly focuses on Dostoevsky's shorter fiction such as "Бобок" ("Bobok") and "Сон смешного человека" ("Son smeshnogo cheloveka"; "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man"), and notes Dostoevsky's fondness for the carnivalesque, such as scandalous scenes (120-121), ambivalent heroes (124-125), dream visions and fantastic journeys (122-124), etc. As Bakhtin also discusses the polyphonic nature of Dostoevsky's texts, he relates the multitude of voices and the constant dialogue with the carnivalesque in his work:

> In Dostoevsky's world all people and all things must know one another and know about one another, must enter into contact, come together face to face, and *talk* to one another. Everything must be mutually reflected and mutually elucidated dialogically. Therefore all things that are distant and separated must be brought together in a single "point" in space and time. And for this the *freedom* of carnival and carnival's artistic conception of space and time are needed. (148)

That is, carnival allows for all things and people, who would otherwise remain separated by hierarchy or other separations present in non-carnival life, to engage in dialogue, allowing contradictory positions to coexist simultaneously.

René Wellek disagrees with Bakhtin's reading of Dostoevsky, stating in his review of Caryl Emerson's 1984 translation of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*:

> "carnivalesque" is not a correct characterization of Dostoevsky's general tone and attitude, even though we may grant it might fit some scenes in his novels. Bakhtin says that "carnival is a way of sensing the world as one great communal performance," as "joyful relativity," but nowhere in Dostoevsky can be found a depiction of collective rapture. There is nothing in Dostoevsky of Rabelais's corporality, of the lust for life of the Roman *saturnalia*, or the comic exuberance of the Italian *Commedia dell'arte.* Dostoevsky represents rather the opposite of the carnival spirit. He was a man of deep commitments, of profound seriousness, spirituality, and strict ethics, whatever the lapses in his own life. ("Dostoevsky's Carnival" 92)

Wellek is critical of Bakhtin's reading, asserting, among other things, that his broad definitions allow for almost anything to be considered carnivalesque. Wellek then focuses heavily on some of the features of Bakhtin's carnival, and ignores other crucial properties of the carnivalesque mode. It is true that few would call Dostoevsky's work "joyful," yet, it contains what Bakhtin calls "reduced laughter," which "is given its most important, one might say decisive, expression in the author's ultimate position, which excludes any possible one-sided, dogmatic seriousness and does not permit any one point of view or pole of life or thought to become absolutized" (Bakhtin *Problems* 138). The multitude of different attitudes means that Dostoevsky's work is filled with a dark, mocking humor, which is directed at everyone at once. Dostoevsky's characters often take on the role of fools speaking to kings and overshadowing them, arguing against their ideology; Grand Inquisitor's monologue before Christ in *Братья Карамазовы* (*Brat͡ʹi͡a Karamazovy*; *The Brothers Karamazov*) is one such example. The Underground Man of *Notes* spews hateful comments, and Fyodor Karamazov's speeches are filled with nonsense, but even though everything is taken to an extreme, it coexists with and brings attention to its opposite. Bakhtin provides several examples of these pairings, including faith that borders on atheism and atheism that borders on faith, nobility that is close to sordidness, and chastity understanding of corruption (148). Dostoevsky often creates situations which allow for such juxtapositions and invert established norms to create temporary upside-down worlds.

Somewhat in line with Wellek's criticism of Bakhtin's use of the term "carnival" when speaking of texts that are more dark than joyful, Michael André Bernstein

recognizes a form of carnival different from that described by Bakhtin, one that embodies "a negative and bitter strand at the core of the Saturnalia itself" (17). In his book *Bitter Carnival*, he discusses a less comical and productive version of the carnivalesque. He focuses in particular on the abject hero, who performs the same role a fool would fulfill in a dialogue with the king; creating a carnivalesque atmosphere of inversion of established values and dominant wisdom. Yet, this abject hero is painfully aware that his role is unoriginal and ineffective. Dostoevsky's Underground Man is an example of such a character, at once a voice of dissent and a cynical parasite that ultimately effects no change.

Bernstein discusses Dostoevsky's novels specifically, and reflects:

> There is considerably more laughter in Dostoevsky's novels than we tend to remember, and there are times when he seems, after Flaubert, the supreme comic novelist of the 19th century. But his humor has a distinctly hysterical edge, and the most riveting moments of his characters' laughter are often accompanied by murderous impulses towards self and others. (90)

Carnivalesque humor does not disappear in Dostoevsky. It astutely mocks and humiliates, often in morbid ways, and is, in the typically carnivalesque fashion, commonly related to violence, just as it was in the early Spanish picaresque. The reader finds him or herself implicated, either as a more or less willing participant in the mockery; or as an unsuccessful and humiliated critic of the abject hero's views. The characters themselves simultaneously occupy positions of attackers and sufferers, delighting in their anguish and spreading their misery. They rage against the society into which they cannot insert themselves, and their "pettiness and an unforgiving, self-tormenting grudge is exactly what is most urgent in the Underground Man, in Fyodor Karamazov, and in all the

desperate buffoons and abject souls writhing through Dostoevsky's fiction" (95). Their criticism of society that has rejected them is convincing, and yet, their position as society's castoffs and their bitterness harm their persuasiveness. The reader cannot fully identify with these characters, and therefore rejects, if not their arguments, at least the authoritativeness of their position. The productive nature of the carnivalesque is thereby stunted. In spite of the Underground Man's ranting, he does nothing, and changes nothing.

This dark carnival is partially already present in the Spanish picaresque, in spite of its jovial tone. The pícaro, in a temporary position of authority in his role as narrator is given the opportunity to speak and offer an alternative to the dominant vision, a point of view from below. Still, the reader is kept at arm's length from the pícaro, whose confessed crimes he or she is likely to reject. In spite of his enduring optimism and the implicit vision of a more open society, the pícaro's victories do not tend to be long-lasting, and his new world is similarly elusive. Yet, unlike the Underground Man, the pícaro at least brings change into his own life and his self-fashioning is productive in ways in which that of Dostoevsky's characters is not. Even though they are often aware of playing a role – Bernstein gives the example of Fyodor Karamazov – the impulse under which they act is different, as "The Dostoevskian buffoon humiliates himself to forestall the humiliations he knows lie in wait for him" (90). The ruminations over the injustices they have suffered, and their continuous complaints are in part pleasurable, just like the toothache the Underground Man describes, as they allow for the self-indulgent performance of agony. Bernstein points out that, while the "Abject Heroes of

Dostoevsky's novels are usually not crying out with the pain of hunger" (96), unlike their picaresque counterparts, they have an intense awareness of their own marginality and hold in contempt those who are content with their positions or achievements. The Underground Man holds on to an embittered awareness of his own position, but in contrast to the pícaro, does not work on changing it, or himself. His pessimistic vision is primarily a counterargument to those who, like Chernyshevsky, embrace an unrealistic optimism.

Dostoevsky's Carnivalesque Dystopia

In Vera Pavlova's fourth dream, Chernyshevsky outlines the post-revolutionary utopia. A crucial aspect of this new society is complete material fulfillment. There is no lack in this new world, everything is provided, and even upgrades are possible if one happens to have more extravagant taste. There is a strong emphasis on pleasure, as the material wellbeing allows for the freedom to enjoy oneself. The people of this future Russia are «ведущие вольную жизнь труда и наслаждения» "leading a free life of work and enjoyment" (Chernyshevsky 294; 378).

Dostoevsky does not perceive the arrangement that Chernyshevsky proposes as utopic. In fact,

> Such a Utopia of total freedom was, for Dostoyevsky, total slavery to the material, and a slavery, moreover, that he was deeply convinced human nature would never accept. If 'reason' meant a world in which man no longer had an opportunity to feel the inner freedom involved in choice, then he would go mad and destroy such a world simply to prove his freedom to do so. (Frank 82)

Indeed, as Frank indicates, if every decision is rational, then there is only one possible route to take. This rationality translates into a lack of choice, and is therefore one of the

Underground Man's biggest gripes with Chernyshevsky's utopic model. A life so well arranged is, in the view of the Underground Man, against human nature. The Crystal Palace may only be built when one's life is so organized and prescribed, that no questions can be asked, and everything is so pre-calculated and prearranged, that no decisions need to be made. The Underground Man warns:

> Конечно, никак нельзя гарантировать . . . что тогда не будет, например, ужасно скучно . . . зато все будет чрезвычайно благоразумно. Конечно, от скуки чего не выдумаешь! Ведь и золотые булавки от скуки втыкаются, но это бы все ничего. Скверно то . . . что чего доброго, пожалуй, и золотым булавкам тогда обрадуются. (Dostoevsky *Notes* 24)
>
> Of course, you can't guarantee . . . that it won't be deadly boring . . . But, on the other hand, everything will be planned very reasonably. But then, one might do anything out of boredom. Golden pins are stuck into people out of boredom. But that's nothing. What's really bad . . . is that the golden pins will be welcomed then.[55] (109)

The problem is, the Underground Man muses, that a man is a man and not a piano key; he will not allow to be made to always produce the same sound; the same response. Man cannot be convinced to always act in accordance with reason, nor would he always act in his own self-interest. In fact, man will feel a strong impulse to act *against* his own interests, and have desires that are unpredictable and do not fit in with the «какого-то нормального, какого-то добродетельного хотения» ("normal and virtuous set of wishes") (Dostoevsky *Notes* 25; 110) that Chernyshevsky seems to presuppose. Moreover, contradicting the philosophy of rational egoism, the Underground Man states that a human will act in ways harmful to himself, «чтоб иметь право пожелать себе даже и глупейшего и не быть связанным обязанностью желать себе одного только

[55] All translations of *Notes from Underground* are by Andrew R. MacAndrew.

умного.» ("in order to *establish his right*[56] to wish for the most idiotic thing and not to be obliged to have only sensible wishes") (27-28; 112) The Underground Man hazards a guess that, in spite appearances, this will prove to be the most advantageous of humans' characteristics, as it preserves our individuality, a most valuable possession. The Underground Man's attitude is, at its core, carnivalesque, as it is a rejection of rationality and order, and an embracing of disorder.

The Grand Inquisitor's Bargain

The ideas that Dostoevsky puts forth in *Notes* are amplified in *The Brothers Karamazov*, and particularly in "The Grand Inquisitor" chapter. This section of the novel is an embedded narrative which has often been published separately. Ivan recounts to his brother Alyosha, a novice monk, a prose poem that he composed. In his tale, Christ returns to Earth in 16th century Seville and is soon captured by the Inquisition. The bulk of the narrative consists of the Grand Inquisitor speaking to Jesus, who is referred to only as the Prisoner, and whom he wants put to death. While *Notes* responds directly to certain parts of Chernyshevsky's novel, often by invoking the same motifs or creating parallel episodes to *What Is to Be Done?*, "The Grand Inquisitor" takes the ideas that the Underground Man examines philosophically and applies them to an entire social system. "The Grand Inquisitor" is therefore a social embodiment of the ideals expressed in *What Is to Be Done?*.

[56] Emphasis not added.

The Grand Inquisitor accuses Jesus of returning to Earth in order to hinder the Catholic Church[57], which has spent fifteen centuries doing the hard work of taking the burden of freedom off humanity's shoulders. He asserts that «теперь и именно ныне эти люди уверены более чем когда-нибудь, что свободны вполне, а между тем сами же они принесли нам свободу свою и покорно положили ее к ногам нашим.» ("precisely now, these people are more certain than ever before that they are completely free, and at the same time they themselves have brought us their freedom and obediently laid it at our feet"[58]) (Dostoevsky *The Brothers Karamazov* 284; 251). The Grand Inquisitor expresses directly the idea implicit in most utopias - that happiness is a lack of freedom. Man, a rebellious creature by nature, can never be happy, as he will always find reasons and ways to revolt. Taking this possibility away – just as the Underground Man feared – is the path to happiness.

The Grand Inquisitor chastises the Prisoner for sending humanity into the world

> с каким-то обетом свободы, которого они, в простоте своей и в прирожденном бесчинстве своем, не могут и осмыслить, которого боятся они и страшатся, – ибо ничего и никогда не было для человека и для человеческого общества невыносимее свободы! (284)
>
> [with] some promise of freedom, which they [men] in their simplicity and innate lawlessness cannot even comprehend, which they dread and fear - for nothing has ever been more insufferable for man and for human society than freedom!" (252)

[57] Of course, Dostoevsky belonged to the Russian Orthodox Church and, in part, the Grand Inquisitor episode is a criticism of the Catholic Church. The choice of setting, Inquisitional Spain, in part highlights the perception of Catholicism as a religion that is not only heretical, but is also corrupt and cruel.
[58] All translations of *The Brothers Karamazov* are by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky.

The Grand Inquisitor assures Christ that people will follow blindly whoever gives them safety, and that he overestimated humanity when he allowed people the freedom of choice instead of buying their obedience. The Grand Inquisitor predicts:

> Поймут наконец сами, что свобода и хлеб земной вдоволь для всякого вместе немыслимы, ибо никогда, никогда не сумеют они разделиться между собою! Убедятся тоже, что не могут быть никогда и свободными, потому что малосильны, порочны, ничтожны и бунтовщики. Ты обещал им хлеб небесный, но, повторяю опять, может ли он сравниться в глазах слабого, вечно порочного и вечно неблагородного людского племени с земным? (286)

> They will finally understand that freedom and earthly bread in plenty for everyone are inconceivable together, for never, never will they be able to share between themselves. They will also be convinced that they are forever incapable of being free, because they are feeble, depraved, nonentities and rebels. You promised them heavenly bread, but, I repeat again, can it compare with earthly bread in the eyes of the weak, eternally depraved, and eternally ignoble human race? (253)

The Grand Inquisitor's bleak view of human nature is the exact opposite of the opinions expressed in Chernyshevsky's novel. In *What Is to Be Done?*, people only need to be given an opportunity to work together for everyone's benefit, and they embrace it, as the most natural thing to do. The women in Vera's workshop understand easily that cooperation is the key to their happiness, they therefore experience no jealousy and bear no grudges when one's position is more demanding than another's, even though the earnings are split equally. They come to share everything, and are in return given a certain sense of freedom, which is the earthly bread of which the Grand Inquisitor speaks: they no longer worry about providing for themselves and are satisfied with their work conditions. Yet, even that freedom is illusory. The women become a system, which functions according to its own rules, and which overrides the individuality of each person that forms it. The idea is, of course, that the whole that they create is better and stronger

than each separate part. However, the human impulse, according to the Grand Inquisitor, would be to rebel against this system, to have other desires that their cooperative cannot satisfy. To prevent a rebellion, they must be kept in line through a mixture of security and fear that it will be taken away from them.

While the Grand Inquisitor speaks in religious terms, the point he makes goes beyond the nefarious designs of the Inquisition. The heavenly bread that humanity is willing to give up is not only the rewards of the afterlife; it also signifies a spiritual death on Earth, as well as a renunciation of one's independence and individualism. The Grand Inquisitor asserts, «Нет заботы беспрерывнее и мучительнее для человека, как, оставшись свободным, сыскать поскорее того, пред кем преклониться» ("There is no more ceaseless or tormenting care for man, as long as he remains free, than to find someone to bow down to as soon as possible") (Dostoevsky *The Brothers Karamazov* 287; 254). In Chernyshevsky's text, man has found something to take away the pain of freedom, as his socialist utopia trivializes free will. The goddess asserts that there is free will in her domain (294; 378), and one is indeed free to choose where to live, what to eat, how to spend one's free time. And while these choices do appear to be unrestricted, in Dostoevsky's view, this variety of choice does not mean that there is really free will. The choices that the citizens are able to make are inconsequential, and only relate to the material world and the fulfillment of simple desires and whims. In the world presented by the goddesses, the fulfillment of all basic physical requirements extinguishes the need of making spiritual or moral choices: there is no anguish, no worry, just a constant merriment. In return for their conscience and their free will, people can live their lives

without the pain that moral choice affords them. The goddess essentially offers the same bargain as the Grand Inquisitor.

Systems similar to the one the Grand Inquisitor describes are imagined in greater detail by later writers such as Zamyatin and Huxley. Various forms of control – the constant surveillance through clear walls in *We*, and the drug-induced happiness in *Brave New World*, ensure there are few opportunities for people to question this arrangement, and they instead view the governing body as a benefactor, ensuring everybody's safety and happiness. In the view of the Guardians in *We*, or the Controllers in *Brave New World*, taking away the burden of free will is the path to utopia, and the arrangement is wholeheartedly accepted by the majority of the population.

Part of these systems' utopic setup is the suggestion that happiness is available to everyone who complies. This idea is contrasted with the burden of making the correct moral choice, while potentially also enduring difficult material conditions: a test that the vast majority would fail. In the religious context, this failure means an exclusion from Heaven, though man is built to be weak. The Grand Inquisitor accuses Christ:

> И если за тобою во имя хлеба небесного пойдут тысячи и десятки тысяч, то что станется с миллионами и с десятками тысяч миллионов существ, которые не в силах будут пренебречь хлебом земным для небесного? Иль тебе дороги лишь десятки тысяч великих и сильных, а остальные миллионы, многочисленные, как песок морской, слабых, но любящих тебя, должны лишь послужить материалом для великих и сильных? (286-287)

> And if in the name of heavenly bread thousands and tens of thousands will follow you, what will become of the millions and tens of thousands of millions of creatures who will not be strong enough to forego the earthly bread for the sake of the heavenly? Is it that only the tens of thousands of the great and strong are dear to you, and the remaining millions, numerous as the sands of the sea, weak but loving you, should serve only as material for the great and the strong? (253)

It is, of course, precisely this weakness that the Grand Inquisitor preys on. And yet, he is not a duplicitous character, as his belief in his project seems genuine. He is instead in many ways a tragic figure, who makes sacrifices for the benefit of others – or at least believes that he does. The text focuses on his physical appearance that stresses his material wellbeing, thus indicating that the Grand Inquisitor is taking full advantage of his share of the earthly bread, but his burden lies in his declaration that «лишь мы, мы, хранящие тайну, только мы будем несчастны» ("only we, we who keep the mystery, only we shall be unhappy") (293; 259). Those that carry the truth and know the difference between good and evil, remain unhappy, tormented not only by their own conscience, but by the weight of making the choice for others.

While only the Grand Inquisitor speaks, the opposing worldview is implicitly present in the narrative in the figure of Christ. Alyosha represents this view as well, as he offers an interpretation of his brother's poem that contradicts the point of view of the Grand Inquisitor. He exclaims that «Поэма твоя есть хвала Иисусу, а не хула…» "[the] poem praises Jesus, it does not revile him" (294; 260) and he takes issue with the figure of a suffering inquisitor, claiming that if the Catholic Church is the way that Ivan describes it, it is for its own gain. He denies the Grand Inquisitor the right to claim his own utopic view, and only admits the Orthodox view, which he sees represented in the figure of Jesus, as utopic. The two visions are at odds; they are the dystopia to the other's utopia. Ivan eventually admits that the Grand Inquisitor must

> ринять ложь и обман и вести людей уже сознательно к смерти и разрушению, и притом обманывать их всю дорогу, чтоб они как-нибудь не заметили, куда их ведут, для того чтобы хоть в дороге-то жалкие эти слепцы считали себя счастливыми. (296)

> accept lies and deceit, and lead people, consciously now, to death and destruction, deceiving them, moreover, all along the way, so that they somehow do not notice where they are being led, so that at least on the way these pitiful, blind men consider themselves happy. (261)

In fact, happiness on Earth can only be approximated, and the utopia offered by the Grand Inquisitor is only an illusion, but one that he values over the real thing, as Heaven is unachievable for most people. Ivan here admits that the Grand Inquisitor's utopia may actually be something much more sinister, "death and destruction" (261). Yet, if people believe that they are happy, what is the difference?

Though he dresses his devil's advocate in the Inquisitor's robes, Dostoevsky seems to suggest that this is the path on which Chernyshevsky's new men have been led, and that the happiness in the Crystal Palace is illusory. He suggests a spiritual emptiness as a trade-off for material wellbeing, and a controlling force behind the supremely ordered life. Utopic ideals cannot be fully carried out by everyday, feeble humans, who will require a strong hand to guide them, and in spite of the Grand Inquisitor's claims of humanism, the force he represents is explicitly evil, as he aligns himself with the Devil.

The situation is undoubtedly carnivalesque. The Grand Inquisitor, though he is who he says he is, is also masquerading as a protector of the faith. He declares himself an enemy of Christ, working actively against God, and the standard narrative is inverted. Coming from an atheist narrator within a Russian Orthodox environment, there is perhaps not much surprise in this reveal. There is no denying, however, that the Grand Inquisitor presents us with a topsy-turvy world where his role is the upside-down version of his traditional function. In addition, the Grand Inquisitor, whose earthly power is of the

highest order, finds himself in the unexpected position of taking on the traditional role of the fool. When he faces the Prisoner, he is in fact confronting the only authority that is higher than himself. The conversation between the two is really a monologue, as Christ never says a word, highlighting the inequality between them. On the one hand, hierarchies are inverted, and God becomes a prisoner of his own representatives on Earth – a carnivalesque idea, though not executed with much humor. On the other hand, Christ seems to see no need to explain himself to the Grand Inquisitor, nor does he seem to waver. His only answer is the kiss he gives at the end, a sign of his persistent love. While the Grand Inquisitor's performance is confident as he claims superiority, his coolness breaks under the kiss he receives as the only answer, and he releases his prisoner.

While Ivan cannot accept his own world as the creation of a just God, the Grand Inquisitor's alternative also remains unappealing. Some of the same arguments that Ivan uses can be turned against his creation. The Grand Inquisitor acknowledges his own sacrifice, but does not recognize the removal of choice and free will as a sacrifice of the people. It would seem that human nature, led in either direction – to rebellion on one hand, or to willful submission to authority on the other – is incapable of creating, and even less of maintaining, a utopic state.

We: The Totalitarian Science Fiction Novel Outlined

Much like Dostoevsky, Zamyatin also engages with Chernyshevsky directly, using the imagery from *What Is to Be Done?* to discredit the socialist utopia, but he also expands on the ideas that Dostoevsky presents in *Notes from the Underground* and "The Grand Inquisitor". As Robert Louis Jackson points out, "*We* is related to *Notes from the*

Underground: it sets out, first, to satirize and expose rationalist, utilitarian, utopian socialist ideas and ideals, and, secondly, to show that man is essentially an irrational being" (151). The Underground Man accuses his imagined interlocutor of proposing that:

> эти законы природы стоит только открыть, и уж за поступки свои человек отвечать не будет и жить ему будет чрезвычайно легко. Все поступки человеческие, само собою, будут расчислены тогда по этим законам, математически, вроде таблицы логарифмов, до 108 000, и занесены в календарь; или еще лучше того, появятся некоторые благонамеренные издания, вроде теперешних энциклопедических лексиконов, в которых все будет так точно исчислено и обозначено, что на свете уже не будет более ни поступков, ни приключений. (Dostoevsky *Notes* 24)

> all there is left to do is to discover these laws [of nature] and man will no longer be responsible for his acts. Life will be really easy for him then. All human acts will be listed in something like logarithm tables, say up to the number 108,000, and transferred to a timetable. Or, better still, catalogues will appear, designed to help us in the way our dictionaries and encyclopedias do. They will carry detailed calculations and exact forecasts of everything to come, so that no adventure and no action will remain possible in this world. (109)

Zamyatin bases *We* largely on this comment about a society based entirely on timetables. The novel's protagonist, D-503, expresses his horror at his awareness that there are still two hours in the day not prescribed for him, while exalting the Table, which

> каждого из нас наяву превращает в стального шестиколесного героя великой поэмы. Каждое утро, с шестиколесной точностью, в один и тот же час и в одну и ту же минуту, — мы, миллионы, встаем, как один. В один и тот же час, единомиллионно, начинаем работу — единомиллионно кончаем. И сливаясь в единое, миллионнорукое тело, в одну и ту же, назначенную Скрижалью, секунду, — мы подносим ложки ко рту, — выходим на прогулку и идем в аудиториум, в зал Тэйлоровских экзерсисов, отходим ко сну...[59] (Zamyatin 14)

[59] Taylor here most likely refers to Frederick Taylor's ideas in *The Principles of Scientific Management* (1911). As John Hoyles notes, "The Soviet Union was also intensely interested in Taylor's system, and articles praising it and urging its application under socialist relations of production appeared as early as June 1921." (101)

> turns each one of us right there in broad daylight into a steel six-wheeled epic hero. Every morning, with six-wheeled precision, at the very same hour and the very same minute, we get up, millions of us, as though we were one. At the very same hour, millions of us as one, we start work. Later, millions as one. We stop. And then, like one body with a million hands, at one and the same second according to the Table, we lift the spoon to our lips. And at one and the same second we leave for a stroll and go to the auditorium, to the hall for the Taylor exercises, and then to bed.[60] (13)

People, who no longer have proper names, but are instead identified with a series of unique alphanumeric characters such as D-503 or I-303, become a sort of living machinery, ecstatic at the fact that they are no longer required to make any decisions. They are referred to as Numbers, and their communal progress – for the titular We refers to the precedence that the community takes over the individual – is called the progress of the Machine[61] (Zamyatin 16; 15).

In *We*, The Crystal Palace of Vera Pavlova's dream becomes a city of glass, perfectly arranged according to rational principles. Its see-through walls allow constant and uninterrupted oversight and control, both by the government and one's neighbors. D-503 exalts the openness of his life to all inhabitants of the OneState:

> Это право у нас — только для сексуальных дней. А так среди своих прозрачных, как бы сотканных из сверкающего воздуха, стен — мы живем всегда на виду, вечно омываемые светом. Нам нечего скрывать друг от друга. К тому же это облегчает тяжкий и высокий труд Хранителей. (20)

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[60] All translations of *We* are by Clarence Brown.

[61] Orwell also echoes the *Notes*, as the Underground Man's musings on life lived with the arithmetic certainty of two times two makes four[sic] is obsessively examined in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, albeit from a different angle. Winston Smith clings to the idea that two times two makes four, even when his torturers claim it makes five. Orwell presents the idea of such a strong order as terrifying, as he imagines a world in which even the Underground Man's statement, «Дважды два и без моей воли четыре будет» ("There's no need for free will to find that two twice two is four") (Dostoevsky *Notes* 30; 115) no longer holds true, as the laws in place are not laws of nature at all, but simply laws of a human power.

> We get to use the blinds only on Sex Day. Otherwise we live in broad daylight inside these walls that seem to have been fashioned out of bright air, always on view. We have nothing to hide from one another. Besides, this makes it easier for the Guardians to carry out their burdensome, noble task. (19)

The see-through walls, combined with a detailed timetable, take most choice away from the inhabitants of the OneState. As rebels manage to find ways around these predicaments, the State begins to lobotomize its citizens, thereby eradicating the possibility of free choice or action. This outcome is a physical enforcement of the Grand Inquisitor's philosophy.

Utopic Space in *We*

We creates its dystopic environment by allowing a utopic ideology to play out to its logical conclusion, so the space in *We* is designed to create and preserve a particular utopic vision. The glass walls, inherited from Vera Pavlova's vision in her fourth dream, are a particularly memorable and effective feature of the world Zamyatin imagines[62]. OneState also encloses its citizens within the Green Wall – so called because through it, the greenery of the outside world is visible. The use of glass for the outside wall means that the inhabitants can see the terrifying sea of green, with its complete lack of order or rationality, just outside of their ordered world. The connection between nature, disorder and inspiration is made early on, when the pollen makes the narrator think about sweetness on others' lips; thoughts that he deems illogical (Zamyatin 6; 5). However, the Green Wall stands not only as a symbol of separation of OneState from nature through technology, but a division within the people of OneState, who are forbidden from

[62] The glass walls will transform into the telescreens in Orwell, but their function as a panopticon remains largely the same.

accessing the irrational parts of themselves. They are separated from a part of their own nature, forbidden from imagination and any forms of desire or creativity not sanctioned by the state. Only the rebels venture into nature beyond the Green Wall, and only from that unordered space can they imagine a different world.

While almost everything in OneState is designed with the idea of transparency, the state allows the existence of a heterotopic space[63], an ancient house which serves as a museum. This place has solid walls, impenetrable to curious eyes, and is filled with old, and therefore subversive, things. In Foucault's terms, the house is primarily a heterotopia of time, as it preserves the objects within, and it allows the visitor to step into a world of before. The tunnel which leads outside the city, and allows the rebels to enter nature and meet the people living outside of the OneState begins in the house, so that the two alternative spaces are connected, becoming one and the same. The apelike people outside the Green Wall and the ancient house become part of the same revolutionary vision, which includes a rejection of a technologically advanced and altered space and a return to a time before OneState. The existence of the space of the ancient house, which is meant to serve as a reminder of the positive changes that OneState has brought to its citizens, means there is a physical representation of an alternative, maintained within the dystopia itself.

Rational Egoism and Individuality

As Morson writes, in dystopias, the protagonists typically

[63] Such spaces as typical of the genre. For instance, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, there is the apartment where Julia and Winston meet, and in *Brave New World*, there is the Reservation.

> believe at first in the possibility of definitive answers and timeless truths; but they achieve at last a wise epistemological modesty, a recognition of the inadequacy of all human explanatory systems to account for the complexities of nature and human nature. In short, they begin where their utopian counterparts end, and end where the later begin (122)

What begins as a record of life in OneState to be sent into space, becomes a personal diary of D-503's mental and emotional breakdown as he becomes involved with a group of rebels and begins to question the utopic nature of his society. Irrationality begins to fill the pages of a diary of a man who is obsessed with being rational, and who is a product of society run with mathematical precision. Chernyshevsky's rational egoism, which he illustrated through a love triangle, is again examined through a love story, but the outcomes align closer with Dostoevsky's predictions.

D-503's infatuation with and emulation of rationality begins to show cracks very early in the text, as does his communal spirit. While the novel is entitled *We*, the first word of the novel is «Я» ("I"), signaling D-503's eventual turn towards individuality. The intentionality of this inclusion is more obvious in the original, in which the "I" is redundant, as Russian does not require a personal pronoun to mark the subject. Therefore, Zamyatin could have simply used the verb and dropped the pronoun, and begun his novel with the word «Списываю», meaning "I am copying" D-503's second entry opens with musings on nature – the very thing the city's glass walls are meant to keep out. The pollen that flies into the city, which he can taste, distracts him from logical thinking, an early sign of man's ultimate inability to control both the nature outside and inside of him. His hairy hands, «какой-то нелепый атавизм» ("some kind of stupid throwback") (Zamyatin 10; 9), are an insistent reminder of a natural bond with the people outside the

walls, who resemble apes in their hairiness. This "throwback" to a prehistoric time is a nostalgic and alternative vision of utopia to that of the OneState. In the third record, D-503 expresses OneState's views of history as teleological: «вся человеческая история, сколько мы ее знаем, это история перехода от кочевых форм к все более оседлым. Разве не следует отсюда, что наиболее оседлая форма жизни (наша) — есть вместе с тем и наиболее совершенная (наша).» ("all human history, as far back as we know it is the history of moving from nomadic life to a more settled way of life. So, doesn't it follow that the most settled form of life (ours) is by the same token the most perfect form of life (ours)?") (13; 11-12) That is, all history developed as it did to bring Man to his most perfect state, which in D-503's view is achieved in the OneState. This idea is mocked by his encounters with the apelike humans outside the wall, who seem to be living a fulfilling existence in harmony with nature. The implied simplicity of living out in the great green expanse outside the glass walls is a sort of pastoral utopia which competes against the technocratic political structure of the OneState.

As the text progresses, not only does D-503 completely lose sight of rational egoism and takes part in a plan to sabotage his own spaceship, but each of the characters is revealed as an individual, with irrational and uncontrollable desires. For instance, D-503's friend and state poet, R-13, feels the need to write real poetry instead of only being allowed to exalt the OneState. D-503's sexual partner, O-90, decides to be a mother, in direct violation of OneState's plans for her. Several characters, including O-90 and D-503's love interest and revolutionary, I-330, are committed to self-sacrifice in the name of others, and with no regard to the effect their actions may have on their communities:

O-90 crosses over the Green Wall into the wild for the sake of her unborn child, and I-330 dies for her cause. The characters' ultimate fates contradict the OneState's narrative of sameness and happiness, as each spirals more and more out of state control, overtaken by their secret hopes and desires.

Self-Fashioning

The citizens of the world Zamyatin imagines have an incredible ability to self-censor and self-control, as a result of the almost absolute panopticonism. *We* takes the form of a diary, so that in and through D-503's writing, the protagonist allows his public persona to withdraw, and reveal another, rebellious side. The form of the journal resembles that of a confession. Although D-503 still self-censors, and wavers between his two personas, he is able to, in the safe space of the diary, reveal his unorthodox thoughts and behaviors, which would be considered a sin against the totalitarian state. The device of the journal is repeated in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, although the text is not told in the first person in its entirety. The diaries that Winston Smith and D-503 keep record the striking difference between the thoughts that they censor, and often self-censor, and the mask that they put on in public. First person narration is common in totalitarian dystopic fiction, and there is a marked similarity between this tendency and the picaresque, which frequently takes a form akin to a confession. As a product of the inquisitional context, the Spanish picaresque reflected a need to be hypervigilant about one's behavior, and displayed a split in the narrator: the old Lázaro and the boy Lazarillo; the Guzmán narrating the events after he has embraced God, and his godless self that preceded his

spiritual conversion. A similar split is often produced in the characters of dystopic science fiction before and after they begin to record their thoughts.

The pícaro's confession is also a means of manipulation, as he attempts to present himself as a likable victim of circumstance, in spite of immoral or illegal acts he may have committed. Similarly, although D-503 begins his journal as a true record, without an ulterior motive, as his views begin to change, he begins to utilize different strategies to separate himself from his own behavior, thereby splitting himself into two. He begins to write about a sickness that has overtaken him, excusing his behavior as a result of a mental illness. At times, his two personas almost speak to each other, recording the contradictory thoughts in his head, as when he tries to convince himself that his experiences, thoughts and feelings are the result of a delirium, concluding finally: «Нет: к счастью — не бред. Нет: к несчастью — не бред» ("No, fortunately, it isn't delirium. No, unfortunately, it isn't delirium") (Zamyatin 166; 186). His true thought, the relief that he is truly experiencing his life with all the pain that it entails is immediately followed by the practiced, rational response of fear and regret. D-503 lies to himself and his future readers, struggling to maintain at least a façade of orthodoxy, promising, for example, to report I-330, who recruits him to join the new revolution, to the Guardians:

> «После 21 ½ — у меня был свободный час. Можно было бы уже сегодня пойти в Бюро Хранителей и сделать заявление. Но я после этой глупой истории так устал. И потом — законный срок для заявлений двое суток. Успею завтра: еще целых 24 часа.» (30)
>
> After 21:30 I had a free hour. There was still time today to go make my report to the Bureau of Guardians. But I was so tired after that idiotic business. And then, too, you have two days by law to make the report. I'd still have time tomorrow, a whole twenty-four hours. (32)

D-503's record of his non-action is both a confession and an excuse: he notes carefully what he failed to do, but rationalizes it by referring to the rules and regulations of the OneState. The double excuse, citing both a personal reason – exhaustion – and a practical reason – legal timeline – reveals his level of discomfort: he is acutely aware of his failure to immediately comply with the law, and therefore desperate to explain himself.

As D-503 becomes more infatuated with I-330, and begins to question the rules of his world, his writing becomes more and more irrational and lyrical. The titles he gives to every entry begin to reflect his state of mind more than the contents; so that Record 27 is titled, «НИКАКОГО КОНСПЕКТА — НЕЛЬЗЯ.» ("No Contents – Can't") (131; 147); and Record 38 is «НЕ ЗНАЮ, КАКОЙ. МОЖЕТ БЫТЬ, ВЕСЬ КОНСПЕКТ — ОДНО: БРОШЕННАЯ ПАПИРОСКА.» ("[I Don't Know What Goes Here, Maybe Just: A Cigarette Butt]") (190; 215). The detailed records of OneState's progress towards space conquest very quickly become a true personal diary, filled with poetic and abstract imagery.

D-503 eventually embraces the philosophy of the Underground Man, and the human need to act out and destabilize the system without any rational explanation, only to assert one's own existence. While stability is the primary quality of the utopia that OneState promotes, the desperate attempts to maintain that stability is also the beginning of its dystopic reality. I-330 mocks OneState's misunderstanding of human nature, stating:

> А счастье... Что же? Ведь желания — мучительны, не так ли? И ясно: счастье — когда нет уже никаких желаний, нет ни одного... Какая ошибка, какой нелепый предрассудок, что мы до сих пор перед счастьем — ставили

> знак плюс, перед абсолютным счастьем — конечно, минус — божественный минус. (158)
>
> And happiness... what is it, after all? Desires are a torment, aren't they? And it's clear that happiness is when there are no longer any desires, not even one . . . What a mistake, what a stupid prejudice it's been all these years to put a plus sign in front of happiness. Absolute happiness should of course have a minus sign, a divine minus. (177)

This logic, that happiness is freedom from desire, ultimately fails, and D-503 cannot willingly give up his lover and embrace the promise of happiness that the Operation –a lobotomy – would provide. An alternative vision of happiness is introduced when D-503 encounters an animal staring at him from the other side of the Green Wall and thinks suddenly, «А вдруг он, желтоглазый, — в своей нелепой, грязной куче листьев, в своей невычисленной жизни — счастливее нас?» ("And what if yellow-eyes, in his stupid, dirty pile of leaves, in his uncalculated life, is happier than us?") (81; 91). This early thought matures to a frenzied exclamation: «И надо всем сойти с ума, необходимо всем сойти с ума — как можно скорее!» ("everybody has to go mad, everybody must absolutely go mad, and as soon as possible!") (136; 152). As rationality fails D-503, he comes to accept that «Мне было ясно: все спасены, но мне спасенья уже нет, я не хочу спасенья...»[64] ("All were saved, but there was no saving me, not any longer. *I did not want to be saved*...") (159; 179). He chooses irrationality, knowingly acting against his own best interest, just as the Underground Man predicts a person would do, when faced with a perfect world. Zamyatin thereby reaffirms Dostoevsky's dystopic reading of Chernyshevsky's utopia as incompatible with human nature.

[64] Emphasis not added

There is no final revolution

What Is to Be Done? prophesizes the revolution as the event which would usher in a new, utopic age. Although the text cannot directly refer to it, there are references to this upcoming event throughout, and encouraging participation in revolutionary activity is a central goal of the novel. Instead of anticipating the revolution, Zamyatin chooses to set it in a distant past[65]. OneState's population is already living in the promised post-revolutionary utopia, but Zamyatin's text undermines the importance of the revolution, and the stability of the utopic system.

D-503 initially rejects the possibility of participating in a revolution by announcing that «революции не может быть. Потому что наша — это не ты, а я говорю — наша революция была последней. И больше никаких революций не может быть» ("there can't be a revolution . . . our revolution was the final one. And there cannot be any further revolutions of any kind") (Zamyatin 149; 168). I-330 turns his own rationality against him, reminding him that there is no final number, and therefore, «А какую же ты хочешь последнюю революцию? Последней — нет, революции — бесконечны. Последняя — это для детей: детей бесконечность пугает, а необходимо — чтобы дети спокойно спали по ночам» ("how can there be a final revolution? There is no final one. The number of revolutions is infinite. The last one – that's for children") (149; 168). This statement rejects the possibility of a planned utopia, as well as the possibility of an unchanging social system. Each society has its discontents, with alternative visions of what would make for a better world. Each revolution is

[65] A past so distant that, not only is it not in the characters' living memory, but humans have had time to evolve into two groups: the hairy ape-like people that populate the world outside the Green Wall, and those inside it, who consider any resemblance to an ancient human a shameful characteristic.

therefore followed by another, which *We* exemplifies, as the novel concludes with an all-out civil war.

While the novel ends with most of the population lobotomized and with little hope of a government overthrow, the system is no longer static. The government begins to wall off the city, shrinking their utopia further. Instead of spreading into space as planned, it ends up taking up only a part of the previous territory. Although D-503's beliefs have been forcefully realigned with those of his government, and he desires it to be victorious, he notes: «в западных кварталах — все еще хаос, рев, трупы, звери и, — к сожалению, — значительное количество нумеров, изменивших разуму» "in the western quarters there is still chaos, roaring, corpses, animals, and, unfortunately, quite a lot of Numbers who have betrayed reason" (200; 225). This statement leaves open the possibility of a new utopic vision – that of the rebels – taking hold and restructuring OneState.

CHAPTER CONCLUSION

While the romance nature of *What Is to Be Done?* is usually dismissed as a ruse that helped the text avoid censorship, Chernyshevsky's choice of the romance mode aids his political message. At its core, the novel is a quest narrative, which promotes an up-and-coming intellectual and social movement and the values of an ascendant class. The structure of the quest presents the rise of socialism as a journey from the dark reality of the characters' (and, by extension, the readers') lives, in which they are stifled by existing social structures and expectations, into a future world that the revolution would bring.

The revolution is therefore the goal of the quest, even though it cannot be addressed directly.

The primary utopic space of this socialist romance is the dreamscape of Vera Pavlova's fourth dream. The dream locates the utopia in a future Russia, simultaneously real and fantastical. It is a techno-agrarian utopia, in which scientific advances allow for a perfectly arranged communal life of abundance. In addition to this utopic locale, the text features heterotopic bubbles which verge on utopia, but which exist within the dystopic reality of the rest of the text, and therefore cannot fully achieve their utopic potential.

The generally dystopic setting of *What Is to Be Done?* is a necessary contrast to the utopic vision of a post-revolutionary world. However, in addition to the dystopic backdrop, the text's very utopianism – the idea of a perfectly arranged communal society based on rational egoism – features a dystopic undertone, without which the utopia would not function. Dostoevsky and Zamyatin's readings of Chernyshevsky focus on the dystopianism inherent in a utopia which promotes a strictly material fulfillment. Both authors consider a life so well arranged to be against human nature, and write carnivalesque versions of Chernyshevsky's vision, in which happiness is a lack of freedom, available to anyone who submits completely to the governing body – be it the Catholic Church as in "The Grand Inquisitor" or OneState as in *We*. In Zamyatin and Dostoevsky's upside-down worlds, the motifs and images from Chernyshevsky's work find their grotesque counterparts, as societies are run on absolute rationality, while individuality and choice are given up in return for contentment found in the satisfaction of basic material and carnal desires. These texts reject the philosophy of rational egoism

as a viable path to utopia, judging irrationality and pain to be crucial to the human experience. The idea of a utopia as an ideal state, in which there would be no desire for deviation or change is countered with Zamyatin's idea that there can be no final revolution, reducing Chernyshevsky's supposed conclusion of the quest to simply another in a series of adventures.

Chapter Four: The Russian Picaresque

The 17th century "Повесть о Савве Грудцыне ("Povest′ o Savve Grud͡tsyne"; "The Tale of Savva Grudtsyn"), and "Повесть о Фроле Скобееве" ("Povest′ o Frole Skobeeve"; "Frol Skobeev, the Rogue"[66]), are early examples of the Russian picaresque tradition. The two texts follow adventures of young men: Savva makes a bargain with the devil, who accompanies him on his travels, while Frol cons his way into a marriage that improves his social standing. Although the Spanish picaresque tradition predates the Russian, Marcia A. Morris is correct in concluding that there is no compelling evidence that it directly influenced these early Russian texts (Morris "Russia, the Road, and the Rogue" 75-76). It is likely that Western influence only came into play in the 18th century to "become a secondary layer in the formation of the genre. And once this secondary layer is added, there emerges a new, hybrid form that corresponds in its broad strokes, if not in more finely grained ways, to the western picaresque" (76).

While the early Russian picaresque developed without any Spanish models, the Spanish tradition eventually reached Russia through French translations[67], which altered the works to focus more on adventure (Morris "Russian Variation" 60). Some of the 18th and 19th century picaresque texts which were influenced by Western models were Mikhail Chulkov's *Пересмешник, или Славенские сказки* (*Peresmeshnik, ili Slavenskie skazi; The Mocker or Slavonic Tales*), which came out in five parts between 1766 and

[66] Zenkovsky translates the title as "Frol Skobeev, the Rogue" in his collection, *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles and Tales*.
[67] The first Russian edition of *Lazarillo de Tormes* appeared in 1775. See George O. Schanzer, "*Lazarillo de Tormes* in Eighteenth-Century Russia" for a discussion on the diffusion of *Lazarillo* in Russia.

1789; his *Пригожая повариха, или Похождение развратной женщины* (*Prigozhai͡a povarikha ili Pokhozhdenie razvratnoĭ zhenshchiny; The Comely Cook, or the Adventures of a Debauched Woman*) from 1770; followed by a number of other texts, the most popular of which was Faddei Bulgarin's 1825's *Иван Выжигин* (*Ivan Vyzhigin*) (Morris "Russian Variations" 57). Spanish influence on the Russian picaresque can certainly be felt in Nikolai Gogol's 1842 picaresque novel *Мёртвые души* (*Mërtvye dushi; Dead Souls*). At Pushkin's suggestion, Gogol partially modeled his text on Cervantes' *Don Quijote*. However, as Elliot S. Glass recognizes, Gogol was influenced not only by Cervantes's masterpiece, but also by the gentlemen of appearances who populate the Spanish picaresque. In Glass's words,

> Gogol's protagonist in *Dead Souls* along with most of his supporting characters could easily have walked out of *La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes, El Buscón, Guzmán de Alfarache,* or *Periquillo Saniento.* Chichikov, like the *hidalgos de apariencia* who abound in these picaresque novels, is an excellent manipulator and salesman of appearances who travels from inn to inn plotting, scheming, and living by his wits. (79)

Moreover, Cervantes's unusual picaresque "Coloquio de los perros," which features canine protagonists, was a possible influence on Gogol's story «Записки сумасшедшего» ("Zapiski sumasshedshego"; "The Diary of a Madman"), which contains a correspondence between two dogs, and at the end of which the protagonist imagines himself to be the king of Spain. Murray Baumgarten even treats Gogol's "Шинель" ("Shinel´"; "The Overcoat") as a picaresque epic. He points out the text's

> picaresque quality, as illustrated by the emphasis on the satisfaction of bodily needs, the meanness of the fictional world which is only concerned with the satisfaction of these needs, and by the narrator's voice which comes from the world of *Lazarillo de Tormes.* (188)

Baumgarten argues that "The Overcoat" combines a picaresque with a lyric-epic world, which modify each other, constructing a picaresque epic. However, the article utilizes the term picaresque in a very broad manner, almost equating it to realism and missing an opportunity to discuss the carnivalesque connection between Gogol's work and the Spanish picaresque.

The protagonist of *Dead Souls*, Chichikov, not only "share[s] the picaro's lovelessness, selfishness, and yearning for respectability, but he also inhabits the 'dead' society once portrayed in the Spanish picaresque novels" (Blackburn 188). The wandering Chichikov fashions himself an identity which allows him to buy titles to dead serfs from landowners, as a means of entering high society. The protagonist's preoccupation with food and clothing matches that of the Hispanic pícaros, as well. Glass goes on to draw parallels between various characters and their Hispanic picaresque counterparts, and he points out the structural similarities between Gogol's work and the Spanish picaresque: a series of adventures tied together by what Glass considers to be a one-dimensional protagonist. While Glass claims that both provide "a vivid panorama of all social classes and the operative norms between those classes" (86), *Dead Souls* offers a narrower view of Russian society than the picaresque tended to give of Spain, since the traditional Spanish pícaro moved among nobles and beggars alike and Chichikov avoids the lowest stratum of society[68]. Still, Chichikov's travels and elaborate schemes are

[68] The narrator of *Dead Souls* observes: "the author is most ashamed to occupy his reader for so long with people of low class, knowing from experience how reluctantly they make acquaintance with the lower estate. Such is the Russian man: strong in his passion for knowing someone at least one rank above himself, and a nodding acquaintance with a count or prince is better to him than any close relation with friends." (Gogol *Dead Souls* 18) This attitude is in part a commentary on the Russian obsession with titles.

reminiscent of the Spanish picaresque, and especially of Guzmán de Alfarache and his complex cons[69].

DEAD SOULS: A PICARESQUE FOR IMPERIAL RUSSIA

The narrator of *Dead Souls* describes the novel's protagonist as a man lacking in virtue, replacing the traditional hero:

> пора наконец дать отдых бедному добродетельному человеку, потому что праздно вращается на устах слово 'добродетельный человек'; потому что обратили в лошадь добродетельного человека, и нет писателя, который бы не ездил на нем, понукая и кнутом и всем чем ни попало; потому что изморили добродетельного человека до того, что теперь нет на нем и тени добродетели, а остались только ребра да кожа вместо тела; потому что лицемерно призывают добродетельного человека; потому что не уважают добродетельного человека. Нет, пора наконец припрячь и подлеца. Итак, припряжем подлеца! (Gogol *Dead Souls* 236-237)

> it is time finally to give the poor virtuous man a rest, because the phrase 'virtuous man' idly circulates on all lips; because the virtuous man has been turned into a horse, and there is no writer who has not driven him, urging him on with a whip and whatever else is handy; because the virtuous man has been so work out that there is not even the ghost of any virtue left in him, but only skin and ribs instead of a body; because the virtuous man is invoked hypocritically; because the virtuous man is not respected! No, it is time finally to hitch up a scoundrel. And so, let us hitch up a scoundrel.[70] (228-229)

These words seem to confirm Ludmila Buketoff Turkovich's theory that Chichikov's character is "an accurate inversion of that of the hidalgo. Just as Don Quixote is completely good, so Chichikov is completely bad. Here lies the fundamental inversion, and from it, logically and naturally, are derived all his other qualities, which are true

[69] As another piece of evidence in favor of Hispanic influence, Karl Ludwig Selig draws attention to parallel episodes in the second, unfinished part of *Dead Souls,* and *Lazarillo de Tormes*. In *Lazarillo*, the squire leaves his estate after he is offended by the way he is addressed, while in *Dead Souls*, Tyentyetnikov's professional and neighborly relationships suffer for the same reason.

[70] All translations of *Dead Souls* are by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky.

negatives of the positive" (50). However, Turkovich does not note this character's picaresque nature.

In *Don Quijote*, as in the picaresque, the environment of the chivalric romance is exchanged for a more realistic setting, pointing to the incongruity between the "real" world and chivalric idealism. But while the picaresque provides a roguish antihero, who is the knight's opposite, Don Quijote wholeheartedly imitates the idealized hero, embodying the apparently foolish idealism of a chivalry. Gogol embraces the parody present in *Don Quijote* but replaces the knight and his unfaltering belief in the righteousness of his way with an unscrupulous antihero. Although Turkovich does not call it that, the resulting novel is a picaresque, and Turkovich's own characterization of Chichkov reveals him to be a pícaro. She writes of his "unscrupulousness and cold connivance for the purpose of achieving his desired ends"; his "self-love . . . [to him] humanity is not to be loved, but to be exploited"; his use of women as a "means to an end"; and his "mask of hypocritical respectability [behind which] lie craftiness, treachery and dishonesty" (50). His focus on self-fashioning is also reminiscent of the Hispanic pícaros. Turkovich adds that, while Chichkov is for the most part the exact opposite of Don Quijote, he does possess "the knight-errant's strength of will and perseverance . . . by virtue of them, [they] pursue their self-imposed missions, undaunted by failure, privation or fatigue" (51) This stubbornness is again in line with a typical picaresque antihero, who perseveres against all odds, thus reflecting some of the idealism of the chivalric romance.

Gogol imagined *Dead Souls* to only be the first part of a modern-day *Divine Comedy*. Chichikov was meant to go through a spiritual journey that ultimately reforms him. Gogol's original plan is reminiscent of *Guzmán de Alfarache*, in which the pícaro's adventures lead him to a reformation (though the degree and the sincerity of Guzmán's spiritual conversion remains ambiguous). While the complete work of *Dead Souls* may have had a different effect – perhaps a rise from a dystopic to a utopic worldview – the text available is steeped in dystopia in many of the same way as the Early Modern Spanish picaresque. The view the narrator holds of the text's dystopic nature is evident in the first lines of the second volume, which describes the first part as «выставлять напоказ бедность нашей жизни и наше грустное несовершенство» ("a show of the poverty of our life and our sad imperfection") (Gogol *Dead Souls* 263; 257). Gogol's novel focuses on the itineration the of its highly flawed protagonist and the types of corrupt individuals that he encounters, while the plot revolves around swindles, gossip, bribe-taking, an ineffective judicial system, and the institution of serfdom.

The novel is highly carnivalesque, beginning with its very premise. Chichikov's elaborate scheme involves buying dead souls – that is, deceased serfs - which would make him appear to be a rich man. The ploy is attractive to the sellers because it releases them from having to pay taxes on their dead serfs between two censuses. The plan is as ingenious as it is macabre, and Chichikov's negotiations with landowners are filled with dark humor. Sobakevich, for example, tries to get Chichikov to pay as high a price as possible, and argues: «Право, недорого! Другой мошенник обманет вас, продаст вам дрянь, а не души; а у меня что ядреный орех, все на отбор: не мастеровой, так

иной какой-нибудь здоровый мужик» "Really, it's not so costly! Some crook would cheat you, sell you trash, not souls; but mine are all hale as nuts, all picked men: if not craftsmen, then some other kind of sturdy muzhiks" (Gogol *Dead Souls*108; 101). He continues to pay compliments to his serfs' abilities, as if they were not dead and buried:

> Милушкин, кирпичник! мог поставить печь в каком угодно доме. Максим Телятников, сапожник: что шилом кольнет, то и сапоги, что сапоги, то и спасибо, и хоть бы в рот хмельного. А Еремей Сорокоплёхин! да этот мужик один станет за всех, в Москве торговал, одного оброку приносил по пятисот рублей. Ведь вот какой народ! (Gogol *Dead Souls* 108-109)
>
> Milushkin, the bricklayer! Could put a stove into any house you like. Maxim Telyatnikov, the cobbler: one prick of the awl and your boots are done, and boots they are, too, thank you very much, and never a drop of liquor in him. And Yeremey Sotokplyokhin! This muzhik alone is worth all the others, he went trading in Moscow, brought five hundred roubles in quitrent alone. That's the kind of folk they are! (102)

The reader, much like Chichikov himself, may be taken aback by these claims of value, but they are not much more ludicrous than the idea of buying dead souls in the first place. As the argument between Chichikov and Sobakevich progresses, it turns to a carnivalesque comparison between the living and the dead serfs, implying that, if they are equally valuable, their presence is also equally real and unreal. The carnivalesque death has a way of producing new life (Bakhtin *Rabelais and His World* 21), and so in Gogol, the dead serfs are presented as productive after death. Their abilities are listed as if unaffected by their passing, and indeed, they acquire new value through Chichikov's scheme. The difference between life and death is thus seemingly erased. As everything in carnival becomes its opposite, so that which is unreal can be real.

Characterization of Dead Souls

The landowners that Chichikov encounters are caricatures, reminiscent of the characters bordering on types populating the early Spanish picaresque such as *Lazarillo de Tormes*. Manilov, whose name recalls the verb *манить* (*manit´;* to lure, to attract, or to beckon), is the first person from whom Chichikov purchases souls, is entranced by sentimentality and romanticism. His talk and politeness are empty; indeed, everything about and around him seems to be a beautiful shell without substance. He is supposedly too high-minded to worry about everyday things, and although he and his wife «были, то что говорится, счастливы» ("were what is called happy") (Gogol *Dead Souls* 28; 23), there is a whole litany of issues in his domain:

> Зачем, например, глупо и без толку готовится на кухне? зачем довольно пусто в кладовой? зачем воровка ключница? зачем нечистоплотны и пьяницы слуги? зачем вся дворня спит немилосердным образом и повесничает все остальное время? (Gogol *Dead Souls* 28)
>
> Why, for instance, was the cooking in the kitchen done stupidly and witlessly? why was the larder nearly empty? why was the housekeeper a thief? why were the servants so slovenly and drunk? why did the house serfs all sleep so unmercifully and spend the rest of the time carrying on? (23)

Although everything around him may fall to ruin as he occupies his time with sentimental pursuits, the man's daydreams never come to anything, because action is foreign to him. The narrator comments: «У всякого есть свой задор . . . но у Манилова ничего не было» "Everyone is gripped by something . . . Manilov had nothing" (25; 21). Manilov is empty-minded and has nothing original to offer. The second landowner, Korobochka, into whose house Chichikov wanders much like a knight seeking shelter in a castle (45-56; 41), is consumed with the idea that Chichikov is somehow trying to swindle her.

Korobochka, whose name means “little box,” marking her as superficial and empty inside, is focused entirely on business and the material, and yet her mind is far from sharp. Just as the brainless farm animals that surround her eat up everything, without noticing what they are consuming, so is Korobochka preoccupied with and blinded by her paranoid thoughts about money. The next host is Nozdryov, whose name means “nostril” (inviting thoughts of holes, specifically holes located in the head, and of channels through which things pass through), is an attractive personality whose life revolves around dangerous merriment. The narrator describes him as one of a type: «Лицо Ноздрева, верно, уже сколько-нибудь знакомо читателю. Таких людей приходилось всякому встречать немало» (“The person of Nozdryov, surely, is already somewhat familiar to the reader. Everyone has met not a few such people”) (Gogol *Dead Souls* 73; 68). While he makes friends easily, he also abandons them easily, he is a gambler, often rash and aggressive and with little sense of appropriateness or measure. Due to his reliance on chance, he is as entertaining as he is dangerous. In contrast, Sobakevich, whose name comes from the word for dog, is the landowner who «хлопотал много о прочности» (“seemed greatly concerned with solidity”) (99; 93). He has a harsh and negative view of everyone, considering them all crooks, while he takes full advantage of Chichikov, trying to charge a premium for dead souls. Finally, Plyushkin (possibly coming from the word *плуш*, meaning plush) is perhaps the most carnivalesque of the landowners, a figure that embodies contradictions. Chichikov cannot tell if he is a man or a woman, changing his mind several times, and confusing the wealthy landowner for a servant. His obsession

with the material turns his wealth into trash, as he hoards uncontrollably, wasting and ruining anything that could be useful.

Although these characters are, overall, not quite villainous, they point to a world inhabited entirely by hollow individuals flawed to the point of ridiculousness. They are, much like the serfs they are trading in, and much like Chichikov himself, dead souls, and their world is one of egotism, spiritual starvation, opportunism and corruption. One way in which the narrator highlights the focus on material over spiritual matters is his tireless descriptions of the various foods that Chichikov consumes. Another is the detailing of Chichikov's thorough preparations for public appearances: the reader not only knows that his preparations «Приготовление к этой вечеринке заняло с лишком два часа времени, и здесь в приезжем оказалась такая внимательность к туалету, какой даже не везде видывано» "took him more than two hours, and here the newcomer displayed an attention to his toilet such as has not even been seen everywhere" (Gogol *Dead Souls* 13; 9), but every detail of the grooming is described, reminiscent of epic scenes in which heroes arm for battle. The constant attention to the material is a sharp contrast to Chichikov's lack of concern for his interior life, his soul. This inversion of priorities is reiterated in the fact that the line between objects and subjects is almost imperceptible as characters are often reflected in their environments, so that the person blends into the surroundings. For example, Sobakevich's house reflects his preference for convenience, and so he disturbs the symmetry of the original design, boarding up windows and tearing down columns. All the items that surround him resemble him, and so «каждый предмет, каждый стул, казалось, говорил: 'И я тоже Собакевич!' или: 'И я тоже очень похож

на Собакевича!'» “every object, every chair seemed to be saying: ‘I, too, am Sobakevich!’ or ‘I, too, am very like Sobakevich!’” (102; 95) Inversely, Sobakevich is also very much like the inanimate objects around him - soulless.

At times, characters are also described as what they are not instead of what they are, meaning that even after a lengthy description, it is impossible to conjure up a clear image of them, as they are simply a series of negations. Chichikov himself is initially described as «не красавец, но и не дурной наружности, ни слишком толст, ни слишком тонок; нельзя сказать, чтобы стар, однако ж и не так, чтобы слишком молод. Въезд его не произвел в городе совершенно никакого шума и не был сопровожден ничем особенным.» (“not bad-looking, neither too fat, nor too thin; you could not have said he was old, yet neither was he all that young. His entrance caused no stir whatever in town and was accompanied by nothing special”) (Gogol *Dead Souls* 5; 3) The reader knows what Chichikov is not, but not what he is. At other times, descriptions are vague or contradictory, as when two ladies discuss the girl whose reputation is ruined by Chichikov’s attention, one describing her as far too made-up, and the other as pale as a statue (198; 188). Chichikov’s flights of fancy conjure up unconfirmed backstories and made-up episodes from lives of characters that only appear briefly, or only appear as a name on a list of dead souls. These moments highlight the ability of words to conjure up worlds and makes the characters that are present in the text appear to be even more hollow and soulless. Just as Chichikov can create a person out of a name, so Gogol has created Chichikov – his status as a character, instead of a person, is thus stressed.

And yet, Chichikov is so lifelike that the narrator asks:

> А кто из вас . . . углубит вовнутрь собственной души сей тяжелый запрос: «А нет ли и во мне какой-нибудь части Чичикова?» Да, как бы не так! А вот пройди в это время мимо его какой-нибудь его же знакомый, имеющий чин ни слишком большой, ни слишком малый, он в ту же минуту толкнет под руку своего соседа и скажет ему, чуть не фыркнув от смеха: «Смотри, смотри, вон Чичиков, Чичиков пошел!» И потом, как ребенок, позабыв всякое приличие, должное званию и летам, побежит за ним вдогонку, поддразнивая сзади и приговаривая: 'Чичиков! Чичиков! Чичиков!' (Gogol *Dead Souls* 258)
>
> And who among you . . . will point deeply into his own soul this painful question: 'And isn't there a bit of Chichikov in me, too?' Perish the thought! But if some acquaintance of yours should pass by just then, a man of neither too high nor too low a rank, you will straightaway nudge your neighbor and tell him, all but snorting with laughter: 'Look, look, there goes Chichikov, it's Chichikov!' And then, like a child, forgetting all decorum . . . you will run after him, taunting him from behind and repeating: 'Chichikov! Chichikov! Chichikov! (251)

To read the text and only laugh at Chichikov without recognizing him in oneself is simply a matter of self-deception. The narrator seems to imply that the obsession with status and appearances and the lack of concern with one's soul is present in all. The hypocrisy of readily seeing the bad in others but not in oneself, and the pleasure in taunting others for the same faults that are present in oneself, is, according to *Dead Souls*, a universal tendency.

MOSCOW TO THE END OF THE LINE: A SOVIET PICARESQUE

While *Dead Souls* was a panorama of Russian society of Gogol's time, the Russian picaresque naturally answered to the new political climate of the Soviet Union, reflecting on both the literary legacy of socialist utopia – including Chernyshevsky, but also the later texts of socialist realism[71] - and the actual sociopolitical context in which it

[71] This "officially sponsored Soviet literature" (Clark *The Soviet Novel* 3) is "written to a single master plot, which itself represents a synthesis of the plots of several of the official models (primarily Gorky's *Mother* and Gladkov's *Cement*)." (4-5) While *What Is to Be Done?* is generically different from the novels

was created. Venedict Erofeev's *Москва - Петушки* (*Moskva-Petushki; Moscow to the End of the Line*) is a picaresque for the Soviet era. Written in 1970, the text was circulated in *samizdat* and *tamizdat* formats[72] until 1988, when it was (ironically, considering its subject matter) published in a magazine titled *Трезвость и культура* (*Trezvost´ i kul´tura; Sobriety and Culture*) (Lipovetsky *Charms* 153). A separate edition finally appeared in 1990 (153).

As a nod to *Dead Souls* and the Russian picaresque tradition, Erofeev subtitles his text "поэма," much as Gogol referred to his text as an epic poem. The change to the Soviet sociopolitical context means a protagonist whose preoccupations differ from a pícaro like Lazarillo. Venya is not a typical pícaro, in that his quest is not for social status or economic advancement; nor is he a trickster, a thief or an impostor. Yet, Marcia A. Morris is correct in her assessment of the novel when she says:

> *Moscow-Petushki* [Moscow to the End of the Line] is about many things, but it is, at its simplest level, a story about a rogue and an imagined journey filled with vicissitudes and misfortunes. Viewed formally, it is a highly unreliable first-person account, arranged chapter by chapter as an odyssey through the towns on one of Moscow's suburban rail lines. Thus, in both content and form, *Moscow-Petushki* aligns itself with rogue literature. ("Russia: The Picaresque Repackaged" 214)

Venya is a social underdog, a marginalized alcoholic, cable-fitter and intellectual, who recounts his unsuccessful journey from Moscow to Petushki.

As is typical of the picaresque tradition, Venya is a first-person narrator. His story lacks a firm plot and consists mostly of his musings on the topic of alcohol, his

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of Socialist Realism, "its myths and imagery were the mainstay of official Soviet role and hence of Socialist Realism." (51)

[72] *Samizdat* is the self-publishing, copying and distribution of censored materials, while *tamizdat* refers to materials smuggled out of the USSR and published abroad.

memories, and conversations with fellow passengers (as well as figments of his own imagination or, possibly, supernatural entities) on the (real) Moscow-Petushki train line. Each section of the text is named after stations[73] on the route, and Venya's itineration is somewhat unusual: although he meets a number of characters on his trip, these encounters occur inside the train, which is itself a transient space, a heterotopia that connects the dystopic and utopic spaces of *Moscow to the End of the Line*.

Although the text consists almost entirely of Venya's account of his train ride, it is unclear whether the trip is accidentally circular – that is, due to his inebriated state, Venya misses the Petushki stop and accidentally returns to Moscow– or if the entire journey is simply imagined. Morris's view is that the journey is not real, at least not in physical terms, but is instead a non-spatial, imagined voyage which reflects "our ability to craft an imagined flight of fantasy across time" (216). The text's ambiguity allows for both interpretations, and Morris's example of the lack of any distinguishable features between one section and the next, while each is meant to represent a different part of the journey, is a strong argument in favor of the entire journey being imaginary, just like Venya's obviously invented tales of foreign travel. Yet, there is a symbolic value in a circular journey that finally brings Venya to face the Kremlin instead of the expected paradisiacal Petushki.

If Venya actually undertook the journey, he set off to search for a different life, all the while aware that, in the world in which he exists, he would never be allowed to arrive

[73] The title of each chapter consists of the names of the two stations between which the protagonist is traveling. This format is reminiscent of the structure that Aleksandr Niolaevich Radishchev used in his 1790 *A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow*, a text that recounts an imaginary journey between St. Petersburg and Moscow, each stop revealing a different issue Russia is facing.

at his destination. This belief is in part a self-sabotage in the face of possibility of change, while also being a sad reflection of a lack of available choices and opportunities. To travel by train underscores Venya's lack of agency, as trains can only run along existing railroad lines, and only stop at designated locations for a predetermined amount of time, without any regard for the needs of individuals.

The train on which Venya travels is a microcosm of his world, populated by a cast of characters lacking in diversity. Whereas a traditional pícaro like Lazarillo or Guzmán travels not only through space, but also through a cross-section of society, encountering people from different walks of life, everyone that Venya encounters is remarkably similar. Admittedly, the Spanish pícaros find that people are equally corrupt everywhere, but the characters in *Moscow to the End of the Line* are difficult to differentiate from one another. This apparent sameness is a distortion of the communist ideal of equality. In Zamyatin's *We*, the idea is ridiculed for its impossibility – every time D-503 thinks all the ciphers are the same, he becomes even more aware of the differences between them[74]. In Erofeev's novel, an equality is achieved, but instead of the utopic society of Vera Pavlova's dream, that labors and lives together in a happy and healthy community, the defining characteristic of each of Erofeev's characters is the same: they are all alcoholics single-mindedly focused on acquiring more drink. There is no growth or advancement,

[74] In the second chapter, D-503 remarks that all the ciphers are identical and is challenged by I-303. He looks around him: «Направо от меня – она, тонкая, резкая, упрямогибкая, как хлыст, I-303 . . . налево – O, совсем другая, вся из окружностей, с детской складочкой на руке; и с краю нашей четверки – неизвестный мне мужской нумер – какой-то дважды изогнуты, вроде буквы S. Мы все были разные…» "She was to my right – slender, sharp, tough, and springy as a whip: I-303 . . . To my left was O, completely different, everything about her round, with the babyish crease on her arm. And at the end of our group of four was a male Number that I didn't know. He bent in two places, like the letter S. We were all different…" (Zamyatin 10; 8-9)

neither for the community nor for the individual, as equality is achieved at the level of the lowest common denominator. The idea is reiterated in Venya's remembrance of his time cohabitating with four other men. As Venya keeps his bathroom habits private and fails to announce each time he needs to use the restroom, his roommates accuse him of feeling superior to them, as they judge even this amount of privacy to be excessive (29-31; 30-33[75]). Erofeev thus crushes the ideal of communal living by placing the glass walls of the Crystal Palace around a toilet. In Chernyshevsky's text, the transparent walls of the Crystal Palace showed an awareness that an adherence to rational egoism can only lead to good choices, therefore eliminating any desire to hide[76]. In Erofeev's novel, not only is there no sense of plenty or comfort about the shared living space, which is just one room, but the forced closeness only breeds suspicion and resentment.

A Carnivalesque Journey

Venya combines high-brow literary and philosophical references with a meandering narrative of a drunk's final day. Much of his philosophizing is on the topic of drink, and drinking becomes a way of approaching and explaining every aspect of human life, as well as the main source of carnivalesque elements in the text. Oliver Ready argues that

> while Erofeev's *poema* does recover elements of the carnivalesque as a vital source of its humour . . . the essential spirit of *Moskva-Petushki* is incompatible with that of carnival. Venichka, as Mikhail Epstein has noted, is defined precisely by his lack of energy; physical and sexual vitality seem temperamentally alien to

[75] All translations of *Moscow to the End of the Line* are by H. William Tjalsma.
[76] Except when engaging in sexual activity, for which Chernyshevsky allows privacy. Zamyatin builds on this idea in *We*.

> him. Put simply, it was the mind and spirit that interested Erofeev, not the "lower bodily stratum". (440)

There is a certain truth to Ready's observations – Venya exhibits little energy throughout the text, and he is an intellectual, showing an interest and an understanding of art and philosophy. However, there is by no means a lack of focus on the "lower bodily stratum". For instance, to express a fear of being misunderstood – presumably, in his art – Venya tells the story of how he was known to never pass gas, but was misunderstood when he tried to explain his distaste for doing so in public, and was from there on assumed to have no issue passing gas in front of anyone, anytime (Erofeev 31; 34). Although he is stuck on a train for most of his narrative, he offers quite explicit memories of sexual encounters with his lover (45-47; 53-56) and fantasizes about meeting her again to drink together and make love. Therefore, although he does not engage in sexual intercourse in the timeframe that the novel covers, there seems to be no lack of sexual energy in him. Erofeev expresses the interest in matters of mind and spirit almost entirely through bodily impulses, primarily drink and sex.

Venya's monologues, which he considers to be educational, are a spoof of the intellectuals' involvement in the revolution presented in Chernyshevsky's novel, as he speaks of and encourages drink, which, instead of driving people to a political consciousness and involvement, further detaches them from their reality. In one of his monologues, Venya contemplates the meaning of hiccupping and how its random pattern can be used to explain the human existence:

> Не так ли в смене подъемов и падений, восторгов и бед каждого отдельного человека, - нет ни малейшего намека на регулярность? Не так ли беспорядочно чередуются в жизни человечества его катастрофы? Закон - он

> выше всех нас. Икота - выше всякого закона. И как поразила нас недавно внезапность ее начала, так поразит вас ее конец, который вы, как смерть, не предскажете и не предотвратите . . . Мы начисто лишены всякой свободы воли, мы во власти произвола, которому нет имени и спасения от которого - тоже нет. (Erofeev 53)
>
> Is it not so with every individual's triumphs and failures, ecstasies and afflictions – isn't there the slightest hint of regularity? Is it not thus that the catastrophes in the life of humanity follow one another in confusion? Law is higher than us all. The hiccup is higher than any law. And as its onset so astonished us long before, so its ending will astonish us, an ending which – like death – you can neither predict nor stave off . . . We are deprived of freedom of will and are in the power of the arbitrary which has no name and from which there is no escape. (65)

Since it produces hiccups, drink can explain the human condition. Venya's view is that, from the point of view of humanity, life is random, even if it is guided by God's hand. There is an overwhelming sense that man cannot change his fortune, as is evident in Venya's failed quest, and his premonition of doom. Just as the Hispanic pícaros recognized Fortune as a force in their lives and were frustrated in their efforts to overcome it, Venya's journey is also an attempt to contradict his fate, only to find he is not in control of his own life. His death, the result of a random assault, is the ultimate proof of this philosophy.

Of course, using hiccups as the scientific basis for a philosophy is a mockery of the focus on science such as is present in Chernyshevsky, as well as scientific socialism of Marx. Venya says:

> вожди мирового пролетариата, Карл Маркс и Фридрих Энгельс, тщательно изучили схему общественных формаций и на этом основании сумели многое предвидеть. Но тут они были бы бессильны предвидеть хоть самое малое . . . Жизнь посрамит и вашу элементарную и вашу высшую математику (Erofeev 53)
>
> the leaders of the world proletariat, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, thoroughly studied the schema of social formulae and, on this basis, were able to foresee

> much. But here they would be powerless to foresee the least thing . . . Life will disgrace both your elementary and your higher mathematics. (64-65)

Venya's reflections on hiccupping is a comical refutation of Marxism. Like Zamyatin, who designs a mathematically perfect society in *We* and shows the impossibility of its maintenance due to the unpredictability of human nature, Erofeev also casts doubt on the ability of science to predict the future development of human society and human behavior. Even the movement of the train, which ends up being circular instead of linear, contradicts the idea of progress.

Another instance of the carnivalesque is Venya's professional life. He seems to abhor labor and finds no incentive to engage in it. The laborers in this text differ sharply from those found in Chernyshevsky's novel. There is no sense that labor would benefit them or their community in any way, and instead of self-improvement, the characters only engage in self-destruction. As a foreman, Venya takes it upon himself to optimize the workday. He finds that, as cable-fitters, his team would spend each day in the same way: they would gamble, unwind the cable, get drunk and have to start over. Instead of wasting their time, Venya excludes the cable from the workday completely, so that they can focus on their preferred activities. All the while, their idleness seems to go unnoticed:

> мы им туда раз в месяц посылали соцобязательства, а они нам жалованье два раза в месяц. Мы, например, пишем: по случаю предстоящего столетия обязуемся покончить с производственным травматизмом. Или так: по случаю славного столетия добьемся того, чтобы каждый шестой обучался заочно в высшем учебном заведении... А уж какой там травматизм и заведения, если мы за сикой белого света не видим, и нас всего пятеро! (Erofeev 33)

> Once a month we'd send them our commemorative work projections and twice a month they'd send us our wages. We'd write, for instance, 'On the occasion of the upcoming Lenin Centennial we undertake to eliminate work-related injuries.' Or,

> we'd write, 'On the occasion of the glorious Centennial we shall attain a part-time study rate in higher education of one out of every six workers.' But what were work-related injuries and night school to us, if, because of blackjack, we didn't even get outside and there were altogether only five of us? (Erofeev 36)

The reports that the workers send are irreverent in tone, as they specifically pick projections that are impossible to fulfill and, as he points out himself, absurd; yet nobody seems to notice or care. Fulfilling the expectation and simply engaging in this ritualized behavior is sufficient. The whole exercise is entirely pointless, and the workers seem as aware of the fact as those in charge, mocking the practice of writing up grand projections that are in no way productive or beneficial. Everything about Venya's work is the upside-down version of professionalism. Instead of attempting to increase productivity, he even begins to track his coworkers' commitment to drinking on the job in a series of charts, where he records the number of alcohol units consumed each day.

Venya concludes his description of the workday and the projections with an exclamation: «О, свобода и равенство! О, братство и иждивенчество! О, сладость неподотчетности!» ("Oh, freedom and equality! Oh, brotherhood, oh, life on the dole! Oh, the sweetness of unaccountability") (Erofeev 33; 36). Although Venya is speaking of a period when he was employed, his description of his work life and his appreciation for laziness is reminiscent of the Hispanic pícaro's praise of the life of beggars and street gangs. The main distinction is that the state – whether intentionally or inadvertently - sponsors and rewards the workers' alcoholism and idleness. There is little difference between the various characters Venya introduces as coworkers or superiors, as they all follow the same pattern of indolence, irresponsibility and drunkenness. It is ultimately the physical record of their unprofessionalism that costs Venya his job, but the men who

come to investigate are no different from those represented in the charts: they drink upon receiving the papers, make superficial changes to the organization – firing Venya, but leaving and even promoting others – and drink again before departure.

While the text as a whole abounds in the carnivalesque, the most carnivalesque episode is the one in which Venya tells the story of how he led a revolution. The episode opens with Venya imagining a conversation with God, in which he asserts that he has seen the prototype of the Golden Age – Petushki – but when he pulls aside the branches to step towards it, instead of his beloved he encounters a friend, Tikhonov, who states that he has just finished his work on the theses. Instead of stepping into utopia, Venya thus finds himself in the middle of organizing a revolution. While the event anticipated in *What Is to Be Done* could not be described by Chernyshevsky, Erofeev clearly models his mock revolution on the October Revolution and on the construction of the new social order. Instead of a group of extraordinary men and women, as Chernyshevsky had hoped, Erofeev's revolutionaries are drunken buffoons.

Everything begins with the theses that Tikhonov scrawls on fences. Venya admits that Tikhinov is a brilliant theoretician, but his ideas prove to be «говно-говном» ("pure shit") (90; 120) in action. Although Venya claims to have initially opposed the revolution, he still partakes, in spite of his lack of belief in the cause, as «уж раз начали без меня - я не мог быть в стороне от тех, кто начал» ("once they began it without me, I could not remain aloof from those who began it") (Erofeev 89; 118). He seems to imply that there are no innocent bystanders in the revolution – Venya must pick a side, and so he joins in, and eventually takes over. The drunken "revolutionaries" march on towns,

hold a congress of the victors and a multitude of plenums, and decide it is necessary to destroy the economy, in order to restore it (89-90; 119-120). Once Venya is elected president, he insists on issuing absurd decrees on every minor issue, such as

> передвинуть стрелку часов на два часа вперед, или на полтора часа назад, все равно, только бы куда передвинуть. Потом: слово "черт" надо принудить снова писать чрез "о", а какую-нибудь букву вообще упразднить, только надо поду мать, какую. И, наконец, заставить тетю Машу в Андреевском открывать магазин в пять тридцать, а не в девять...
>
> resetting the hands of the clock two hours forward or an hour and a half back, or any way whatever. Then demanding that the word 'devil' be spelled with a capital D, or cancelling some letter altogether – it's just a question of which one. And, finally, forcing Aunty Masha in Andreevo to open her store at five-thirty instead of nine. (91; 122)

From affecting the way time is kept and controlling speech, all the way down to prescribing an individual's schedule, everything is under Venya's control, and he finally centralizes his authority fully, declaring his power absolute, and beginning his reign of terror with a political murder (94; 126). Finally, after sending a multitude of international missives, many of which are declarations of war, Venya wonders:

> почему это никому в мире нет до нас ни малейшего дела? почему такое молчание в мире? Уезд охвачен пламенем, и мир молчит оттого, что затаил дыхание, допустим, но почем у никто не подает нам руки ни с Востока, ни с Запада? (93)
>
> why wasn't anyone in the world willing to have anything to do with us? Why such silence in the world? The district is in flames, and the world is silent because it is holding its breath, perhaps, but why has no one extended his hand – not from the east, not from the west? (125)

The revolution brings to an isolation, another iteration of the Soviet isolation Venya feels acutely throughout the text. Finally, he abandons his position announcing: «Я ухожу от вас. В Петушки» ("I leave you. For Petushki") (95; 127).

The Socialist Antihero

Venya is an intellectual, and his drunken monologues are interspersed with a multitude of literary and philosophical references, seemingly out of place in the mouth of a drunken cable-fitter. This contrast between his intellect and his place in society is in line with the pícaro's role. His perspective from below calls into question the established order and hierarchies, while making apparent the duplicity and insincerity prevalent in all relationships. As Booker and Juraga mention, the pícaro "serves an inherently negative, critical and antiauthoritarian role in the novel . . . the function of the pícaro is precisely the opposite of that of the positive hero of socialist realism" (60). In contrast to the traditional, positive hero whose defining feature is often heroism, Venya describes himself as a coward:

> О, если бы весь мир, если бы каждый в мире был бы, как я сейчас, тих боязлив и был бы также ни в чем не уверен: ни в себе ни в серьезности своего места под небом - как хорошо бы! Никаких энтузиастов, никаких подвигов, никакой одержимости! -всеобщее малодушие. Я согласился бы жить на земле целую вечность, если бы прежде мне показали уголок, где не всегда есть место подвигам. (Erofeev 22)
>
> Oh if only the whole world, if everyone were like I am now, placid and timorous and never sure about anything, not sure of himself nor of the seriousness of his position under the heavens – oh how good it could be. No enthusiasts, no feats of valor, nothing obsessive! Just universal chicken-heartedness. I'd agree to live on the earth for an eternity if they'd show me first a corner where there's not always room for valor. (20-21)

Venya perceives himself as an anti-hero who does not value bravery, but instead is committed to cowardice; a completely inverted version of a traditional hero. By arguing

for cowardice, he argues for passivity, reflecting the contradiction in his character, as he pursues an unachievable goal, but also self-sabotages.

His attitude puts Venya in contrast with the idealized characters of *What Is to Be Done?*, whose rational egoism always drives them forward, and through which they are motivated to work actively towards bettering their community. His character is the opposite of the socialist ideal, especially when compared to a character such as Rakhmetov – a man entirely dedicated to the cause who has renounced carnal pleasures. As the dream of people like Rakhmetov fails, Venya escapes his dreary reality by devoting himself to drink, and like the Underground Man, engaging in self-sabotaging behaviors, refusing to play by the rules of society. His focus is entirely on himself, not on his community, and his utopia is a personal utopia, as Petushki seems to only encompass himself and his beloved and child. Although he attempts the journey, Venya knows he would never reach his destination, in large part because his position dooms him to failure, and he seems to simply be playing the role that is expected of him. The limits imposed on Venya, marked by the enclosed space of the train over which he has no control, leave him no room to act any other way.

In a way that is familiar from the Hispanic picaresque texts, Venya's self is not whole, but is instead fractured. While *Lazarillo de Tormes* was an anonymous text, and its anonymity allowed for an identification of the protagonist with the author, Erofeev achieves a similar effect by naming his protagonist Venedict Erofeev and indicating that he is a writer. He thus blurs the lines between reality and fiction, and as the author becomes the character, the fictional Russia of the novel is more easily taken to be the real

Russia of Venedict Erofeev, the author. Mikhail Epstein's «После карнавала, или Обаяние энтропии: Венедикт Ерофеев» ("Posle karnavala, ili Obaı͡anie éntropii: Venedikt Erofeev" "After the Carnival or the Charms of Entropy: Venedikt Erofeev") is a good indication of how much Erofeev blurs the lines of fiction and reality in his discussion of Erofeev's self-fashioning through his novel. In Epstein's view, *Moscow to the End of the Line* made Erofeev into a myth, not only because of the parallels between his own life and that of his character (going as far as Erofeev's eventual death of throat cancer, which seems to have been prophesized in his novel), but also the low volume of his literary production, which left room for rumor and speculation (254-255). Epstein takes the similarities between the character and the author as a reason to interpret one through the other and goes so far as to take Erofeev's apparent shyness is taken as proof of Venya the character's post-carnivalesque nature, arguing that a person of delicate nature could not have embraced carnival. Epstein even cites his personal impression of Erofeev upon seeing him, as well as others' reports of his mannerisms and preferences – going so far as to rely on the color of the author's face and the way in which he chewed his food as proof of a lack of carnivalesque elements in his work – arguments that are not really based on the author's literary production, but do indicate a remarkable fusing of character and author in readers' minds.

In addition to the doubling between the author and the character, Venya often has conversations with himself, assuming two personalities at once, or splitting his self between his reason and his heart, as well as engaging with such hallucinations as a group of angels, the devil, and a sphinx. These conversations with himself allow him to express

contradictory thoughts and feelings: hope and despair, fear and persistence, etc. While he occasionally calls himself "Venya" or "Erofeev," he most often refers to himself as "Venichka"[77], using the diminutive form that would likely to be used with a child or a person to whom one is very close. Thus, although Venya does not speak of his childhood, he is infantilized. This use of a nickname is reminiscent of Lázaro's use of the diminutive Lazarillo. As in the case of adult Lázaro referring to his childhood self as Lazarillo, the narrator's choice is perhaps as a means of endearing the character to the reader and making him more sympathetic.

Komaromi also judges Venya's fellow travelers as projections of his own splintered psyche. In her view, each member of the drinking party represents one of Venya's characteristics: "Black Moustache, named by an isolated feature of facial hair, represents Venichka's rhetorical prowess; Grandfather Mitrich with the water trickling out of his eyes represents Venichka's compassion; and so on" (428). In other words, every conversation that Venya participates in, and every character he reflects on, might actually be himself. As Komaromi rightfully notes, these are not fully formed characters, and are instead defined by one particular characteristic. They are reminiscent in this way of Lazarillo's masters, as well as the landowners that Chichikov visits on his trip in *Dead Souls.*

[77] According to Natalia Vesselova's study, the hero is referred to by name a total of seventy times, out of which he is called "Venichka" 33 times. Vesselova notes that each version of the name is used in different circumstances. For example, "Venya" is mostly used by outsiders, and the hero only tends to use it to reproach himself.

Utopia in Moscow to the End of the Line

Venya rides the train on the Moscow-Petushki line to see his beloved and child. Petushki, a real town in Russia and the train's final destination is also the utopic locale within *Moscow to the End of the Line*. Venya claims to have previously visited Petushki, but because he is a highly unreliable narrator, even the parts of his story that recount his experiences there may be exaggerated or simply imagined. In his memories, Petushki is a utopia of Edenic nature. It is a place where «не умолкают птицы, ни днем, ни ночью, где ни зимой, ни летом не отцветает жасмин» ("birds never cease singing, not by day or by night, [it is a place] where winter and summer the jasmine never cease blooming") (38; 43). Unlike Venya, the birds who never stop singing have full freedom of movement and expression, and the ever-blooming jasmine enjoys perpetual growth. There is a sharp contrast between this fragrant garden of Venya's imagination and his actual surroundings. For most of the text, Venya is enclosed in a piece of machinery, the train, and has no contact with nature. The rest of the time, he is in an urban environment. His internal map of the capital consists primarily of the various drinking establishments, but the city is a sort of labyrinth, and Venya rarely knows where he is and never seems to be able to get where he is going. The unfamiliar and strange hallway in which Venya wakes up at the beginning of the story and in which he dies at the end is a synecdoche for the city itself: cold, uninviting, anonymous and brutal. The Petushki of his imagination, with its lush nature, is an escape from this grey reality.

Venya states: «Первородный грех - может, он и был - там никого не тяготит» ("Perhaps there is such a thing as original sin, but no one ever feels burdened in

Petushki") (38; 43). Temptation and sin are a surprising, but crucial part of the utopia Venya imagines. Carnality is not associated with the expulsion from Eden, but an entrance into it (Ready 456). Petushki is itself a carnivalesque sort of paradise, a part of Erofeev's reversal of the sacred and the profane. It is a space in which Venya can indulge in pleasures such as sex and drink. Petushki is not a paradise which will cure him of drink, it is instead a place in which he can drink his fill and yet never feel the negative effects of his addiction; never be hungover or incapacitated[78]. The way Venya imagines drink in his earthly paradise is related to the location of this space. The fact that Venya imagines his utopia within Russia – and, in fact, so close to Moscow – is telling.

Instead of an entirely new world, or even a location outside of Russia's borders, Venya chooses Petushki, reflecting an impossible hope for change within Russia itself. In Petushki, the drink does not cause grief, and it seems not to be caused by despair; it only adds to an already positive experience. Effectively, Venya imagines a Russia that does not drive him to drink. While God has seemingly forsaken Russia, in the Petushki of his imagination, he has the freedom to sin, and can expect to be forgiven. Religious and political imagery often intertwine in the text, such as with the angels who seem to become demons and who chase Venya to the Kremlin. Therefore, the idea of freedom to sin and the possibility of forgiveness extends to a political freedom, a possibility of dissent or difference without dire consequence.

Adding to the carnivalesque ambivalence of the nature of Petushki, Venya describes the woman he is meeting there as «эта белобрысая дьяволица . . . и этот

[78] Venya says that, in Petushki, "even those who don't dry out for weeks have a bottomless, clear look in their eyes." (Erofeev 43)

белесый взгляд, в котором нет ни совести, ни стыда» ("that red-haired she-devil . . . with that whitish gaze in which there is no conscience and no shame") (Erofeev 38; 43). As Cynthia Simmons notes, the text is filled with "the degradation or desecration of that which is actually revered" (164). It is no surprise then, that he later calls his lover «искусительница» ("a temptress"); «рыжая стервоза» ("a red-haired bitch"); «волхвование» ("a witch") (44; 51-52); and «блудница» ("a harlot") (46; 56). The devilish influence of his beloved, who is as devoted to drink as Venya, adds to the image of Petushki as an Eden, complete with temptation in the form of the woman. Instead of being associated with the expulsion from Eden, in this topsy-turvy world, sexuality is a way into paradise. As his lover is of a dual nature, so is the space that she occupies. In a later section of the novel, Venya anticipates seeing his lover, «облаченный в пурпур и крученый виссон смежил ресницы и обоняет лилии» ("arrayed in purple and linen, with the downcast eyes, smelling the lilies") (88;117). This description is filled with biblical references, primarily invoking Proverbs 31 and its depiction of a wife of noble character: "her clothing is fine linen and purple" (*Christian Standard Bible* Proverbs 31:22). The downcast eyes increase the effect of virtue and chastity, while the smell of the lilies, most often associated with Mary[79], is a symbol of virginity and purity. The woman, then, is both at once: the virgin and the harlot.

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[79] Lilies are also mentioned in the Song of Solomon 2:2 (Like a lily among thorns, so is my darling among the young women.) The flowers appear throughout Erofeev's text, most often in relation to perfumes that Venya and his friends consume as alcoholic beverages, and may also be a reference to Matthew 6:28, "And why do you worry about clothes? Observe how the wildflowers of the field grow: They don't labor or spin thread." and Luke 12:27, "Notice how the lilies grow. They don't wear themselves out with work, and they don't spin cloth." (*Christian Standard Bible*) In the context of the novel, this verse about not worrying about physical needs because God would provide for the faithful seems to take on a secular meaning, much like the reference to the harlot and the good wife. Like the flowers, Venya and his friends do not labor, and

This description of the woman dressed in purple and linen is at the opening of a section that describes a mock revolution. As Venya moves to meet his lover, his expectations are betrayed. Instead of the woman he expects, he encounters a man, and with this encounter begins a carnivalesque revolution. The figure who is both a woman and a man, a virgin and a whore can be seen as the embodiment of the revolution, which turns out to be a mockery of the ideals for which it is fought. In addition, her ambivalent nature reveals the impossibility of the existence of a perfect woman. While the text refers to the Christian model, the Soviet ideal is similarly unachievable. The good woman is only a mask, or at best, a half of a whole. In fact, the wife of noble character is not at all what Venya is searching for; his affection and desire are for the wanton seductress.

A Failed Quest

In Venya's imagined Eden, there is no shame or guilt, and he urges himself: «Поезжай, поезжай в Петушки! В Петушках - твое спасение и радость твоя, поезжай» ("Go, go to Petushki. In Petushki you'll find your salvation and your joy, go") (Erofeev 37; 43). Nonetheless, Venya knows all the while that he would never make it to Petushki. At various points in the text, he feels a dread, a premonition of failure. The first indication of this fear appears at the end of the first chapter, when Venya is trying to go to the station to catch his train, and thinks: «И куда-нибудь да иди. Все равно куда. Если даже ты пойдешь налево - попадешь на Курский вокзал; если прямо - все равно на Курский вокзал; если направо - все равно на Курский вокзал. Поэтому иди

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yet they are provided for. Erofeev seems to be mocking a system which provides only enough to survive, but no incentive or possibility for more.

направо, чтобы уж наверняка туда попасть» ("Go on, anywhere. It's all the same where. Even if you turn left, you'll end up at the Kursk Station; or straight, all the same, the Kursk station. Therefore, turn right, so that you'll get there for sure") (19; 615). On initial reading, these words seem comforting, an assurance of success. In hindsight, however, the words are a prophecy of failure, as the journey Venya takes makes no difference, and he ends up right back where he started from, at Kursk station, just as he had predicted. In effect, the novel is a failed quest narrative, and the anxiety of that ultimate failure is woven throughout. For instance, in his drunken state, Venya occasionally sees and talks to four angels, and he asks himself:

> Но почему же смущаются ангелы, чуть только ты заговоришь о радостях на петушинском перроне и после? Что ж они думают? Что меня там никто не встретит? или поезд повалится под откос? или в Купавне высадят контролеры? или где-нибудь у 105-го километра я задремлю от вина, и меня, сонного, удавят, как мальчика? или зарежут, как девочку? Почему же ангелы смущаются и молчат? Мое завтра светло. Да. Наше завтра светлее, чем наше вчера и наше сегодня. Но кто поручится, что наше послезавтра не будет хуже нашего позавчера? (39)
>
> But why do the angels become troubled just as soon as you start talking about the joys of the Petushki platform and after? Do they think nobody is waiting for me there? Or that the train will be derailed, or that ticket inspectors will put me off in Kupavna? Or that somewhere around kilometer 105 I'll get sleepy from the wine and doze off and be strangled like a young boy or cut up like a little girl? Why are the angles troubled? Why have they fallen silent? My tomorrow is bright. Our tomorrow is brighter than our yesterday and our today. But who'll see to it that our day after tomorrow won't be worse than our day before yesterday? (45)

Although he seems to remember the Goddess's assurance in *What Is to Be Done?*, that the future would be «светло и прекрасно» ("radiant and beautiful") (Chernyshevsky 294; 379), he fears it is an empty promise. The angels that Venya imagines appear to be guardians, but they fulfill this function in accordance with Venya's wishes, leading him

on a road of self-destruction, instead into this bright future. The angels urge him to drink, as a way of dulling any feelings of pain (19; 16). They also abandon him, promising that they would meet him at the platform upon his arrival (42; 49). At the end of the novel, Venya is attacked by a group of four men that, to Venya, look like demons with red shining eyes. Their number creates a parallel between this demonic gang and the guardian angels, producing an equivalence between the heavenly and the demonic. When he calls upon his angels, he only hears laughter in response, insinuating that there is perhaps no difference between angels and demons – they are one and the same, meeting him at the platform as they had promised. The transformation indicates that the seed of destruction is already within Venya. Not only are the angels a product of his drunken imagination, and Venya therefore conjures up his own assassins, but he was also foolish to assume that he could even have a guardian angel.

As the angels' mood darkens at the mention of Petushki, Venya interprets their reaction as lamenting his fate, but they may actually be troubled by his very expectation of Petushki, that is, the possibility of breaking into the utopic space of his imagination. The darkest end Venya imagines for himself, that of being cut up or strangled, is of course the real ending to his story, as his attackers stick an awl into his throat. Even his apparently positive view of tomorrow is immediately countered by the idea that it would not be sustained: even if Petushki was reached, Venya would not be allowed to stay there. Still on the train, Venya imagines himself to be outside, trying to walk to Petushki, wondering and asking: «как далеко еще до Петушков! . . . Иду, иду, а Путешков все нет и нет. Уже и темно повсюду - где же Петушки? . . . де же Петушки? Далеко еще

до Петушков?» (“how far is it still to Petushki? . . . I walk and walk and it’s nowhere. It’s really dark all around – where is Petushki? . . . Where’s Petushki, anyhow? Is it still far to Petushki?”) (95; 128) Even in his imagination, where he has exited the train, Petushki is unreachable, as it is a utopia, a place that is nowhere. This fact is confirmed at the climax of his fantastic train journey, when Venya speaks to a sphinx and fails to answer each of its riddles. The sphinx bursts into laughter, concluding: «А в Петушки, ха-ха, вообще никто не попадет!..» “Nobody, in general, ha, ha, will end up in Petushki!” (103; 140) It is not only Venya who is prevented from reaching his utopia: nobody, in general, can ever reach it, and to try is a fool’s errand.

Regardless of whether the journey only happens in Venya’s mind, or if he sleeps through much of it and the train returns him to Moscow, the thwarted attempt to arrive at his destination is an allegory for the various sorts of limits to both spatial and socioeconomic mobility imposed on the citizens of the Soviet Union. As he recounts his supposed travels abroad, he ponders:

> У нас, например, стоит пограничник и твердо знает, что граница эта - не фикция и не эмблема, и потому что по одну сторону границы говорят на русском и больше пьют, а по другую меньше пьют и говорят на нерусском... А там? Какие там могут быть границы, если все одинаково пьют и все говорят не по-русски! Там, может быть, и рады куда-нибудь поставить пограничника, да просто некуда поставить. Вот и шляются там пограничники без всякого дела, тоскуют и просят прикурить... Так что там на этот счет совершенно свободно... (Erofeev 81-82)
>
> With us, for example, a border guard stands there and he knows absolutely that the boundary isn’t a fiction or an emblem, because on one side of it people speak Russian and drink more and on the other they speak non-Russian and drink less. But over there what kind of boundaries could exist, if they all drink and speak non-Russian in the same way? Over there, they might like to set out a border guard, but there’d be no place to set him. So over there the border guards hang

> around without anything to do, grieving and bumming cigarettes. In this sense, things are completely free. (107-108)

If there is such a contrast between the Russian and non-Russian border guards, it is because, while things are "completely free" elsewhere, they are not free in Russia. While he travels, Venya is confined to the heterotopic space of the train, which moves through space but does not allow him to physically reach new spaces himself, as he is contained within the limits of the vehicle. While in other parts, one may move freely, Venya is unable to do so, as his failed journey demonstrates. He is not even able to traverse the 125 kilometers between Moscow and Petushki, but is instead brought back to the place from which he is trying to escape. Moreover, he is brought to finally face the Kremlin, the symbol of state power, before he is murdered.

Alcoholism in Utopia

Everything about Venya's odyssey is told through drink: the experience of the journey, the memories that he and his fellow passengers recount, his philosophical and critical reflections. Venya's drunkenness is sometimes interpreted as divine inspiration, a giving up of one's mind and power to God (Ready 456). This interpretation is somewhat aligned with the view of Venya as a *юродивый* (*i͡urodivyi*), or holy fool. Holy foolishness "is a peculiar form of Eastern Orthodox asceticism whose practitioners, *iurodivye Khrista radi* . . . feign madness in order to provide the public with spiritual guidance yet shun praise for their saintliness and attract abuse in imitation of the suffering Christ" (Kobets 15). The term is also applied to secular behaviors that follow this model (Kobets 16). Venya's homelessness recalls the

> свойственна бездомность святого безумца, который и в народной культуре описывается как не имеющий собственного жилища, что связано с состоянием нахождения в пути и, в связи с этим, с кажущейся странной, игривой постановкой под вопрос устоявшихся, канонических мнений. (Regéczi 152)
>
> homelessness characteristic of the holy madman, who is in popular culture described as having no home of his own, who is on the road, and who seems to hold strange, playful attitudes towards established, canonical opinions.[80]

Venya's character certainly draws on this tradition, as a figure of a down-and-out, drunken philosopher who invites comparisons between himself and Christ. His path to his execution, with its many biblical references, recalls *iurodivyi*'s imitation of Christ's Passion, although he finds no salvation or resurrection. Still, Venya does not fit the figure of a traditional holy fool entirely. Ready, who reads *Moscow to the End of the Line* as a product of the Erasmian tradition, summarizes the ways in which Venya differs from the *iurodivyi* model:

> Unlike the best-known *iurodivye* of Russian hagiography (and their Byzantine predecessors, the *saloi*), Venichka does not value the ascetic feat or *podvig*; he is not obsessed with sin; he is not violent or destructive; and he does not seek to provoke others. Moreover, the formulaic Lives of the *iurodivye* have little to offer when considering the delicate construction and irony of Moskva-Petushki. (441)

The differences stem from Venya's picaresque nature, but the general similarities with the *iurodivyi* do aid in the understanding of Venya's character, as his drunken and often seemingly incoherent or irrational claims hold greater meaning than may initially appear.

The novel, however, is not entirely metaphorical on the topic of drink; Venya loves alcohol for the relief it provides, and he also loves it simply because he is an addict. Venya's lifestyle, and that of his companions on the train, describes the reality of

[80] Translation is my own.

alcoholism in the Soviet Union, and points to difficult and dehumanizing living conditions. Another train passenger, Black Moustache, observes: «Отчаянно пили! Все честные люди России! И отчего они пили? - с отчаянием пили! пили оттого, что честны! оттого, что не в силах были облегчить участь народа!» ("They drank desperately. All the honest men of Russia. And why did they drink? They drank in desperation. They drank because they were honest, because they were not up to lightening the burden of the people") (Erofeev 65; 81-82). The drink dulls Venya's awareness and is a means of escape from his desperate reality. As Ready states, in relation to Black Moustache's observation that both the poor and the intelligentsia drink: "The state's attempts to re-educate both parties have achieved little . . . Behind this history, we may surmise, lies the surreptitious violence and hypocrisy of that same state, which was happy to supply (and stupefy) its citizens with cheap and abundant vodka" (457). Similarly, Simmons argues that, as a totalitarian government takes away citizens' opportunities for "sanctioned rule-breaking" (155), mind-altering substances become an opportunity to break away from oppressive society, resulting in the wide-spread alcoholism in the Soviet Union – possibly even encouraged by the state as an alternative form of release from the pressures of the system (156). For Venya, the alcohol is a means of coping, as well a self-imposed means of control. It both limits Venya and frees him, as he is able to let his imagination run wild, while the drink subdues his body into submitting to the restrictions imposed on him[81]. The drink makes life bearable, and is a

[81] This effect is explained on the very first page of the novel, when Venya, upon having his drink of vodka, comments: "my soul was strengthened in the highest degree while my members were weakened." (Erofeev 17; 13)

necessity in his environment, which is why every character in the novel is a drunkard. The train on which Venya travels is a microcosm of his everyday surroundings, in which he meets an assortment of characters who share both his proclivity for drink and his disdain for labor and social rules. Their misadventures aboard, as well as those they narrate to each other, revolve primarily around alcohol and its destructive effects on their personal and professional lives.

Dystopia in *Moscow to the End of the Line*

The text's title refers to the train line and the journey that Venya is attempting to undertake, from Moscow to Petushki. The two final stations are symbols of dystopia and utopia and Venya's failure to arrive to Petushki is primarily a comment on the unattainability of utopia, including that which the Soviet Union sought to bring into being. The train, set on a circular route, will - at least in Venya's experience - never reach Petushki. That is, it will never achieve its utopic potential, because it will always turn back to Moscow, from which its dystopic reality is controlled. Once Venya begins to realize something is wrong with his train ride and panic starts to enter his mind, he thinks: «А другие-то? Другие-то что: хуже тебя? Другие - ведь тоже едут и не справшивают, почему так долго и почему так темно? Тихонько едут и в окошко смотрят... Почему ты должен ехать быстрее, чем они?» ("And the others? What about the others? Are they worse than you? The others, they're also riding along and not asking why it's so long and why it's so dark. They ride along quietly looking out the window. Why do you have to ride quicker than they?") (Erofeev 98; 132-133). The ride that Venya is on is "long" and "dark," but nobody else seems to be concerned about it. Doubt about

where he is and whether or not the train has turned around reflects another doubt: is his perception of his social reality skewed or unreliable? If others who populate the train, who are all like him, accept the ride and its destination without protest, perhaps the fault is not with the system, but with him. The other passengers are turned to look out the window: they are not facing each other and are instead looking through the glass. While this image may represent an interest in what is outside of the train, and therefore, outside of Russia, it is more likely a commentary on simply looking away, on not getting involved. The passengers do not make eye contact, they are quiet and uncomplaining; they accept their fate[82].

These quiet passengers differ somewhat from the small and precarious community that Venya had taken part in earlier in the novel, a community of marginalized alcoholics, which made the train a topsy-turvy world in which not buying a ticket is the only way to travel without causing the fury of the conductor or fellow passengers. They tell each other stories, revolving primarily around their experiences with alcohol. While the stories themselves are pathetic and violent, they are told merrily, and the group reacts to them with laughter. As Ready states,

> Jollity – the emotional register deemed characteristic of socialist life under Stalin, or during the massive jubilee celebrations of 1967 – finds its shadow in the convivial, alcoholic jollity (vesel´e) of the drinking party. Similarly, the values of equality and inclusiveness prove as fundamental to this party as to the Communist ideology of social justice. (460)

[82] Even Venya, when encouraged by Satan to jump out of the moving train, with the tantalizing promise: «не разобьешься» ("you just might not even get hurt") rejects the idea, admitting: «Не-а, не буду я прыгать, страшно. Обязательно разобьюсь...» ("I'm afraid. I'd have to get hurt") (97; 131).

This group of social outcasts does not exclude, and each member shares their stories and their alcohol; a carnivalesque reflection of the society outside the train. They laugh at themselves and others, prompted by stories of pain, performing the required and practiced jollity expected of the Soviet citizen. But even this community dissolves while Venya is asleep, as if it had never existed.

In Venya's hallucinations, symbols of socialism - figures from Mukhina's iconic statue, *Worker and Kolkhoz Woman*, come alive and attack him with their hammer and sickle (111-112; 153). This grotesque violence is a preview of Venya's ultimate fate upon his unexpected return to Moscow. The capital, and the Kremlin in particular, prove to be unavoidable in the end – but Venya only encounters the Kremlin when he is trying to get away from it. In contrast to the end, when Venya stumbles upon the Kremlin, the text opens with Venya's unbelievable statement:

> Все говорят: Кремль, Кремль. Ото всех я слышал про него, а сам ни разу не видел. Сколько раз уже (тысячу раз), напившись или с похмелюги, проходил по Москве с севера на юг, с запада на восток, из конца в конец, насквозь и как попало - и ни разу не видел Кремля. (Erofeev 17)
>
> Everyone says: 'The Kremlin, the Kremlin.' I hear about it from everybody, but I've never seen it myself. How many times (thousands) I've walked, drunk or hung over, across Moscow from north to south, east to west, from one end to the other, one way or another, and never did I see the Kremlin. (Erofeev 13)

Venya's recurrent searches for the Kremlin are always unsuccessful – instead of the Kremlin, he repeatedly ends up at the Kursk station (18; 14). Venya's inability to reach the Kremlin reflects his complete lack of access to power, and the state's lack of concern for the everyman. Once Venya finally faces the Kremlin, it is only to collapse against its walls and have his head slammed into it. This development is presented as a destiny,

something that Venya could not avoid even though he has felt it coming throughout the text. The common man is always sacrificed at the altar of the state, but his sacrifice is ultimately meaningless. His sudden arrival at the Kremlin, the symbol of the highest power in the atheist Soviet Union, is effectively his moment of crucifixion. Venya aligns himself with Christ throughout the text, at the end asking God: «Для чего, Господь, Ты меня оставил?» "Why hast thou forsaken me?" (118; 162), only to be met with silence.

While there is no critical consensus on who exactly Venya's killers are, the ambiguity of these figures is intentional. They may be the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, the soldiers who killed Christ, or Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin[83] – for Venya, they are one and the same, bringing about the end of his world. Tumanov rightly indicates that, unlike the biblical version of the end of the world, Venya's is "without hope, i.e., without *resurrection*" (109). Because Venya never recovers consciousness after death, his ending is absolute, and does not allow for any sort of afterlife. Tumanov's conclusion, that "Venja's sterile apocalypse may be a reflection of the violently atheistic society in which the action of the novel takes place: Venja undergoes a Soviet materialistic version of The End" (110), is very convincing.

In relation to the text's Apocalyptic theme, Tumanov also asserts:

> Venja's inside-out narrative suggests a narrator for whom time has stopped: a hero who seems to exist somewhere *outside of existence* and is therefore not constrained by its temporal or sequential parameters . . . It seems that Venja has not just died: his trip has brought him not just to the end of his life but to the end of everything. And in this respect the ending of *Moskva-Petuški* recalls the most

[83] For instance, David M. Bethea indicates that the figures are most likely the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse (275), Lipovetsky argues for Christ's executioners ("From an Otherworldly Point of View 70), while Paperno and Gasparov suggest the "titans" of communism (390).

> final of all endings: the Apocalypse. This would imply that the narrator addresses the reader not from beyond the grace but beyond history. (101)

Venya's narrative is paradoxical: at times oral, and at times written, switching suddenly between being told in retrospect and narrating action as it unfolds. These inconsistencies, combined with Venya's death and the assertion that «с тех пор я не приходил в сознание, и никогда не приду,» ("since then I have not regained consciousness, and I never will") (119; 164) all lead to the conclusion that Venya is speaking from a no-place and no-time. This is, however, not a utopic no-place which he had chased after, but instead the final dystopia of the End Time. Ironically, this no-place outside of time is still somehow, if not placed in, at least associated with, Moscow, which "is the site of Venja's Apocalypse and therefore the city of The End" (Tumanov 102). Erofeev's representation of Moscow is in contrast with that city's privileged status in the Soviet Union. Katerina Clark remarks that Moscow was a model for the rest of the country, "a beacon toward which all lesser examples of the phenomenon in question (in this case, towns) should incline . . . All other cities were limited merely to approaching it" ("Socialist Realism" 6). While Chernyshevsky's novel imagined a future idealized space, represented by the palace and fields of Vera Pavlova's fourth dream, Moscow was to become such a space in Soviet reality. Erofeev, however, turns this idea on its head. Venya is not trying to reach Moscow from the periphery, like so many heroes of socialist realism, but is instead attempting to escape it.

As Venya's mind becomes more and more affected by drink and his story's coherence begins to break down, the utopic Petushki starts to blend with the dystopic Moscow. Venya is unable to tell them apart and the chapter names begin to reflect the

blurring of the two spaces. The titles of the final three chapters are: «Петушки. Садовое кольцо.» ("Petushki. Sadovy Circle")"; «Петушки. Кремль. Памятник Минину и Пожарскому.» ("Petushki. The Kremlin.[84]"); «Москва-Петушки. Неизвестный подъезд» ("Moscow/Petushki. An Unidentified Front Hallway"). If Venya had fallen asleep on the train and failed to realize that what he believed was a linear journey had become a circle, the chapter titles only begin to reflect his failure once doubt creeps into his mind. As Venya sees the tall buildings of Moscow, he is hard-pressed to explain such expansion in the town of Petushki (Erofeev 114) and begins to question his reality. Of course, Sadovy Circle is a street in Moscow, which Venya's troubled mind has shifted into Petushki; and he relocates the Kremlin in the same way. In his confused state, Venya argues with himself:

> Не Петушки это, нет!.. Если Он - если Он навсегда покинул землю, но видит каждого из нас, - я знаю, что в эту сторону Он ни разу и не взглянул. А если Он никогда моей земли не покидал, если всю ее исходил босой и в рабском виде, - Он обогнул это место и прошел стороной… (117)
>
> No, this isn't Petushki! If He, if He has departed the earth forever but sees every one of us, I know that He never once looked this way… And if He never left the earth, if He has passed through it barefoot and dressed as a slave, He passed this place by and went off somewhere… (160)

In contrast to Petushki, Venya's personal paradise, Moscow is not only the place from which God has been excluded – through the materialism and atheism of the Soviet Union – but also the place that God has willingly abandoned. There is no possibility of deliverance in such a space, and so Venya finds no path to Petushki, the symbol of salvation. The final chapter unequivocally merges the two locations, as Venya dies in an

[84] Tjalsma opts for this, shorter version of the title.

unidentified hallway – possibly the very same unfamiliar hallway in which he had woken up in the morning.

In Tumanov's view, which is informed by Bethea's reading of Moscow as "the unholy city, the seat of the Antichrist" (Bethea 20), the conflation of Moscow with the paradisiacal Petushki creates a threshold city (Tumanov 103), in which "all paths converge as history prepares for eschatological change . . . the 'profane center' (e.g., the Whore of Babylon) and the 'sacred center' (the New Jerusalem) meet" (45). The eventual identification of Petushki with Moscow also reiterates Venya's complete inability to escape his situation, and stresses the stationary nature of his existence, in spite of his attempts at independent movement. Either his quest is wholly imaginary, and he wakes up and dies in the same hallway in Moscow, or it is an accidentally circular event. Either way, Venya, a social outcast and a drunk rebel, is still kept in place by rules and regulations that he cannot escape, as is exemplified in his thoughts on border guards, and his despair and grief, which inevitably lead him to drink and failure. The utopic Petushki of Venya's mind is not the real Petushki, which, being a part of the same country and system as Moscow, he cannot even tell apart from the capital. By combining the two spaces at the end, the text insists on this point. Venya's utopic Petushki has only ever existed as a fantasy, and even if he had reached the physical location he was attempting to get to, he would have found it not to be the place of eternal spring and birdsong which he had desired.

Anticipating his own death, Venya thinks:

> И если я когда-нибудь умру - а я очень скоро умру, я знаю - умру, так и не приняв этого мира, постигнув его вблизи и издали, снаружи и изнутри,

> постигнув, но не приняв, - умру и Он меня спросит: "Хорошо ли было тебе там? Плохо ли тебе было?" - я буду молчать, опущу глаза и буду молчать…(Erofeev 113)
>
> And if I die sometime – I'm going to die very soon – I know I'll die as I am, without accepting this world, perceiving it close up and far away, inside and out, perceiving but not accepting it. I'll die and He will ask me: 'Was it good there for you? Was it bad there for you?' I will be silent, with lowered eyes. (154-155)

Venya confesses an acute and painful awareness of the world in the midst of his drunkenness. It is for this awareness and clarity that Venya stands silent before God, unable or unwilling to answer the question. He cannot accept what he perceives around him, and his silence is reminiscent of Ivan Karamazov's assertion that he would «только билет ему [Богу] почтительнейше возвращаю» "most respectfully return [God] the ticket" (Dostoevsky *The Brothers Karamazov* 277; 245). Ivan cannot accept as good a world in which the suffering of children is allowed and rejects it, not for lack of belief, but because he cannot logically explain such a world. In a similar vein, Venya's silence is not so much a simple admission of personal despair as it is a silent condemnation of God's creation. He admits:

> Я много вкусил, а никакого действия, я даже ни разу как следует не рассмеялся, не стошнило ни разу. Я, вкусивший в этом мире столько, что теряю счет и последовательность, - я трезвее всех в этом мире; на меня просто туго действует... (Erofeev 113)
>
> I've partaken of much, but nothing works on me. I haven't really laughed properly, even once, and I've never thrown up, even once. I, who have partaken of so much in this world that I've lost count and the sequence of it all, I am soberer than anyone else in this world; it's simply that nothing much works on me. (155)

While others may laugh or cry when faced with the world, or go through phases of joy and desperation, Venya, who has tried it all, can find no relief. All of his coping and

escape mechanisms ultimately fail, and he remains "soberer than anyone else" (155), aware, alone and impotent. Like Ivan, he finds that the idea of harmony – in this case, a socialist utopia, such as the one presented by Chernyshevsky - has not only been sold at a higher price than he is willing to pay, but was an empty promise.

CHAPTER CONCLUSION

Erofeev's *Moscow to the End of the Line* builds on the existing Russian picaresque tradition and updates it for the Soviet era. As the protagonist navigates a socialist system, everyone he encounters is remarkably similar, demonstrating an equality achieved through the lowest common denominator. Instead of hardworking, healthy citizens like those found in the Crystal Palace, Venya and his fellow travelers are all despairing alcoholics. In contrast to the idealized heroes of *What Is to Be Done?*, whose rational egoism leads to a better society for everyone, Venya himself apparently has no interest in others, and is spurred on his train journey by an idea of a personal paradise, a utopia represented by the town of Petushki. However, the trip turns out to be circular, and Venya returns to the dystopic Moscow from which he cannot escape.

The text takes a carnivalesque approach to socialism, mocking and inverting the idea of an equal, productive, and content workforce that enjoys the fruits of its communal labor. Venya's philosophizing is mostly on the topic of drink, which prevents him from taking any real action, mocking the intelligentsia's usefulness to the revolution. His stories are upside-down versions of the fantasy of productivity and abundance represented in Chernyshevsky's text and Soviet propaganda. The revolution he describes is run by drunken buffoons, and ends up in an absurd dictatorship, which controls even

the most minute and irrelevant aspects of peoples' lives. Even the site of Venya's utopia, Petushki, is a carnivalesque representation of Eden, in which sin grants entry and everything can be forgiven.

Ultimately, Venya's quest is a failure, as he finds he cannot change his position, in spatial or socioeconomic terms. Although the text supposedly records a train journey, all of Venya's existence is frustrated movement. Even when he believes he is taking a trip, he ends up in the same place, and his attempts at escape – the drinking and the train to Petushki – only serve to keep him docile and in place. The text therefore asserts that there is no path to utopia, as Erofeev plays with the idea of a stationary itineration. His pícaro never gets anywhere: he is confined to the inside of a train, the people he encounters are all the same, and his journey either never happened, or was circular instead of linear. The narrative thus creates a sense of a claustrophobic existence, an entrapment within a political system which was promised to bring abundance and contentment, but which, in Venya's experience, only produced grief and despair.

Conclusions

In this dissertation, I have argued that the romance and the picaresque are both structured on a pattern of dominant and recessive utopianism and dystopianism. Focusing on two types of romance, the Spanish chivalric romance and the Russian socialist romance, I have shown that, though both are primarily utopic, they rely on an underlying dystopianism without which they would not function. In the chivalric romance, the dystopic engine that moves the narrative forward consists primarily of the numerous interruptions in the utopic landscape which highlight the futility of the knights' efforts, while in the socialist romance, the dystopic environment in which the characters exist is their impetus to achieve a revolutionary utopia. Through a carnivalesque inversion, the picaresque turns the romance on its head, and the dominant utopia is replaced with a dystopia, while a recessive utopianism pushes the narrative forward, as the pícaro believes he can change his situation, and attempts to rise above his circumstances against all odds. The Spanish pícaro disrupts the strict hierarchies that the chivalric romance promotes, while the Russian pícaro reveals the truth behind the false promises of pre-Soviet socialist idealism and of Soviet-era socialism. In either case, however, the dystopianism wins over the implicit utopianism, and in spite of revealing the dysfunction and corruption in their characters and their environments, these picaresque texts offer no solutions.

The first chapter has demonstrated how the Rodríguez de Montalvo's *Amadís de Gaula* constructs, through narrative action, a map of spaces reclaimed from dystopic threats. Throughout Rodríguez de Montalvo's text, the knight errant repeatedly encounters new possibilities for adventure, and therefore, has seemingly unlimited chances for proving his worth. The outcome of these adventures and conflicts, in which

the protagonist always comes out on top, is an upward social mobility. There are always more opportunities, as adventure continuously beckons, and so the knight might acquire lands, receive a generous show of gratitude, or meet a lady of higher social standing, who falls madly in love with him and happily marries down. The text demonstrates that through the knight's unquestioning devotion to ideals of chivalry, every issue within a chivalry-based feudal system can be resolved.

This overall utopianism is amplified in the setting of Insola Firme. The titular hero's domain, which he acquires by proving himself to be the best of knights and the most faithful of lovers, is a plentiful safe haven and the ultimate expression of the chivalric spirit. In this space, everybody is happy in their rightful place – not only the knights and ladies, but also those serving them. The noble inhabitants of this land can enjoy a life of leisure and beauty, without having to face any further dangers. This island is a crucial part of the wish-fulfillment fantasy: by conquering this land through a strict adherence to rules of chivalry, the knight errant achieves socioeconomic security. However, shortly after conquering the island by passing a magical test of his ability and fidelity, Amadís seeks to abandon it.

For adventure itself to be possible, there is necessarily a darkness behind the utopianism, expressed through seemingly constant local breakdowns in the chivalric system, that the knight is called on to repair. Therefore, there is a futility to all of Amadís's labors: the knight's work is never done. Because no such dystopic interruptions can exist in Insola Firme, the island cannot be the setting of a chivalric romance. In order to allow Amadís to both fulfill the wish-fulfillment fantasy (marry, be the lord of his lands, find stability and security), and for the chivalric romance to continue, a new hero is introduced and future adventures are announced, creating the opportunity for the story to continue *ad infinitum*.

The second chapter has shown how the early picaresque texts, including the anonymous *Lazarillo de Tormes*, Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache* and Francisco de Quevedo's *El Buscón* mock and invert the idealism of the chivalric romance, to produce predominantly dystopic texts which feature an implied recessive utopianism. The picaresque is a carnivalesque mode in that it highlights everything that is low: the body and its needs and functions, immorality and vice, grotesque violence, and an overwhelming materialism. It also mocks everyone democratically, not showing any reverence for any particular group or institution, and implicating its protagonist in all the corruption he points out in others. It is in this sense democratic, and it disrupts the hierarchy that is strictly observed in the chivalric romance.

In addition, the pícaros disrupt the hierarchies that the chivalric romance promotes, as they slip through unexpected openings, donning different masks to survive in a world hostile to them. By occupying different roles, the Spanish pícaros draw attention to the fact that everyone is playing a role, more or less successfully. In this way, they demonstrate that everyone around them, including those who are supposedly born into their particular social positions, is similarly concerned with self-fashioning and appearances. The implication – whether the particular authors intended it or not - is that, if everyone is always performing a role, no position is natural or off-limits.

The pícaro's individualist philosophy assumes a utopic system in which even someone from the bottom of the hierarchical ladder could find his way to the top. However, the texts ultimately indicate that such free-for-all social mobility is distasteful

and dangerous. They therefore deny their protagonists a permanent position in higher echelons of society.

The third chapter has discussed Nikolai Chernyshevsky's *What Is to Be Done?* as a kidnapped romance that criticizes the existing sociopolitical system of Imperial Russia and promotes a socialist ideology in its stead. The text overall illustrates the benefits of introducing socialist institutions, such as the cooperative sewing workshops that its heroine, Vera Pavlova, establishes, and suggests abandoning the oppressive institutions of the existing system, especially in terms of marital and familial arrangements.

While *What Is to Be Done* has on occasion been interpreted as a parody of a romance, for example by Andrew M. Drozd, the novel is actually simply a new expression of the romance, where the final quest takes the form of a revolution. Because Chernyshevsky could not express his political views freely, the revolution can only ever be addressed indirectly. He does, however, depict a future world in Vera Pavlova's fourth dream, in which the Russian people live in a Crystal Palace, a sort of techno-agrarian utopia of abundance and free love. In spite of being forward-looking, Chernyshevsky's romance features characters that, while nominally representing a new type of men and women, in fact share many characteristics with the traditional heroes of the chivalric romance, and in some ways embody the same antiquated values they are supposed to be fighting. This dissonance appears to primarily be a remnant of the romance's general snobbism, as it tends to focus on people who occupy high social positions – often nobility and even royalty.

In addition to the seemingly strange concurrence of chivalric and socialist ideals, there are two types of dystopianism that coexist with Chernyshevsky's utopianism. Most obviously, there is the dystopic environment in which his characters live and from which they are attempting to escape by adhering to a philosophy of rational egotism. Additionally, there are the apparently unintentional dystopic undertones within Chernyshevsky's utopic vision. The chapter closes with discussions on texts that have interpreted Chernyshevsky's utopia as a dystopia: Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground* and "The Grand Inquisitor" chapter from his novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*, and Yevgeny Zamyatin' novel *We*. Rejecting rational egoism, these authors demonstrate that Chernyshevsky's utopia could not function, because human nature resists rationality and order, and requires more than material comfort.

The fourth and final chapter has examined the Russian picaresque tradition. I first provide a brief analysis of Nikolai Gogol's *Dead Souls*, which is a picaresque text influenced by Western models. As its roguish protagonist travels from one landowner to another, trying to buy their deceased serfs, the text provides an entertaining view of Russian society at the time of Tsar Nikolai I.

Dead Souls provides a contrast to the text that is the chapter's main focus, Venedikt Erofeev's *Moscow to the End of the Line*. Erofeev's text is a Soviet picaresque, and so this text's protagonist, while a rogue, does not interact with a great variety of characters or try to climb up a social ladder. Instead, he is surrounded with characters who are all remarkably like him, demonstrating the supposed equality of the USSR. However, instead of a Crystal Palace filled with a content populace living in abundance

and harmony, *Moscow to the End of the Line* shows a country filled with marginalized and despairing alcoholics.

The protagonist, Venya, attempts a train journey from the dystopic Moscow to a utopic Petushki, but his trip is a failure. He cannot overcome the limitations imposed on him by the system in which he exists. Even as the text implicates Venya in his own destruction – he self-sabotages, primarily through his drink, which is a sort of paralyzing comfort – it ultimately shows that the system inevitably makes people comply (something that appears to only be bearable through alcoholism and petty revenges such as unproductivity at work), or destroys them. At the end, Venya confuses Moscow and Petushki, as one becomes the other in his mind, and all limits and differences between a utopia and dystopia seem to disappear. The text suggests that there is no possibility of arriving at a utopia, and any promise of a better place is eventually betrayed, as Venya arrives not at Petushki, but back at Moscow, where he is murdered.

While this project demonstrates the existence of the dominant/recessive pattern of utopianism and dystopianism in two related modes (the romance and the picaresque), and discusses why and in what ways it is utilized in various works, it also produces more questions and creates opportunities for further research. Although this dissertation functions largely as a case study and therefore focuses on only two national literatures and two specific moments in their literary histories, the most obvious path for a possible expansion of the project would entail introducing another set of romance and picaresque texts from a different context.

However, even within the contexts that I have chosen to explore within the dissertation, there is certainly room for development. The first chapter, for instance, only focuses on Rodríguez de Montalvo's *Amadís de Gaula*, but, it would be interesting to discover the variations in the utopianism/dystopianism pattern in other Spanish chivalric romances, such as the much earlier *Libro del caballero Zifar*, or Rodríguez de Montalvo's sequel to *Amadís*, *Las sergas de Esplandián* (which, unlike *Amadís*, was an original work and not a reworking of an existing romance). Similar expansions are, of course, possible within the picaresque tradition.

In addition, a project that focuses solely on the utopianism and dystopianism of the chivalric romance, across different national literatures, would be of great value to anyone interested in that period or genre, as well as to scholars working in the individual national literatures that such a project could include. Similar projects on the picaresque could also be developed within national literatures, as well as comparatively.

Alternatively, the presence of a dominant/recessive utopianism and dystopianism can be explored in other expressions of the romance or picaresque modes. While in the case of the romance, I have only investigated the chivalric and the socialist romance, the extremely popular superhero genre, which shares so many traits with the traditional chivalric romance, would be a logical contemporary accompaniment to the medieval and Early Modern romances. A project focused entirely on superhero narratives could take into account graphic novels or films, or even examine whether the particular medium dictates a particular way of formulating utopianism and dystopianism. As superhero films top the box office, and the superhero universe appears to be ever-expanding, an

exploration of why the genre keeps attracting such an audience at this moment in history, and what kind of dystopic responses are being formulated, would also make for a valuable sister study.

I also propose a chronological study of the utopic/dystopic pattern in the development of the picaresque and/or the romance in each of the national literatures the present dissertation discusses. The Russian field is particularly fecund for such a study, as the Russian expressions of these modes have been neglected in comparison to their Spanish counterparts. In recent decades, there has been a veritable boom of dystopic Russian fiction, some of which represents fascinating developments in the picaresque mode. For example, Vladimir Sorokin's 2006 novel *День опричника* (*Den´ oprichnika; Day of the Oprichnik*) pulls on the picaresque tradition: the story follows its protagonist Komiaga on a typical work day, while he travels from one place from another, visiting a variety of characters, who all reveal different aspects of corruption and violence within a totalitarian state. The collusion between Church and the government is particularly prominent, and the narration is delivered in a first person, from a character that actively maintains the dystopic system that is in place. The main difference between Komiaga and most pícaros – including those from dystopic science fiction novels, such as Anthony Burgess's Alex of *A Clockwork Orange* – is that Komiaga is in a position of power. He is not interested in climbing up the social ladder as much as he is interested in bringing others down. Nonetheless, his function in the text is similar to that of other, more traditional pícaros: through his itineration, he allows the reader to observe various aspects of this society, the flaws and vices of the people who inhabit it, as well as – indirectly, as

Komiaga is a member of an elite group – the negative impact this societal arrangement has on the everyman. Sorokin's work is as innovative as Erofeev's, and I believe it is time for a more detailed study of the Russian picaresque, which would include a greater variety of texts than this dissertation was able to accommodate.

Finally, a question that this dissertation has not attempted to answer is one of the possible reverse influence of the picaresque on the romance. As new versions of the picaresque mode surface, such as Sorokin's unusual picaresque-from-above, what effect do these new dystopic articulations have on predominantly utopic texts? This project has also not attempted to fully answer the question whether a similar dominant/recessive utopianism and dystopianism exist in other modes or genres. I have indicated, in my treatment of Dostoevsky's and Zamyatin's texts, that the non-picaresque science fiction dystopia does feature a similar co-occurrence of utopianism and dystopianism. However, a more extensive project examining the interplay between them would grow organically from this dissertation.

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